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SEEN-ROOM EDITION

**OF
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The Club Friend

**OR
A Fashionable Physician
BY
SYDNEY ROSENFELD**



**THE DE WITT PUBLISHING HOUSE
NEW YORK**



THE CLUB FRIEND

OR

A FASHIONABLE PHYSICIAN

An Original Comedy in Four Acts

BY

SYDNEY ROSENFELD

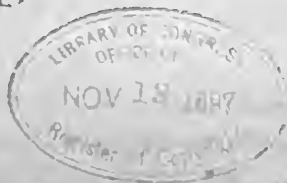
Author of "A Possible Case," "Imagination," "A House of Cards," "The Passing Show"; co-author of "The Senator"; adapter of "The Two Escutcheons," etc., etc.



THE DE WITT PUBLISHING HOUSE
NEW YORK

1897

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

Encouraged by the protection afforded by the new copyright law, I venture to dedicate this comedy to the reading public, without fear of impairing my stage rights. This act of mine is, I know, an incursion into the domain of literature that may prove dangerous; for, in laying my work thus bare, I have no longer the magnetic presence of my actors to gloss over my defects, nor can I screen my faults behind theirs. But I have always maintained that justice to both actor and author demanded the printing and publishing of a play, and it is my intention to include other acted plays of mine in the present series.

In view of the fact that this play is still to be performed, I wish to submit a few suggestions. The character of Stuyvesant Filbert should be played rather by a light comedian with a leaning towards "leading" work, than by a leading man who leans towards comedy, for the keynote of his eccentricities is found in the words: "Once give a man a reputation for levity, and it is the most difficult thing in the world for him to be credited with one grave emotion." The comedy spirit should be dominant in this performance.

The ages of the two principal ladies, as expressed in the cast, do not convey all that is necessary about their demeanor. The subject of feminine age (especially on the stage) is both delicate and misleading. Mrs. Oaks would probably fall to the leading lady, and Sylvia to the leading juvenile; but there should be a certain weight and dignity in the performance of Mrs. Oaks, and a certain animated girlishness

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

in that of *Sylvia*, not quite measurable by their respective years.

The character of Dr. Jarvis really started me on writing this play. I wanted to depict the modern fashionable society physician, as distinguished from the earnest doctor who has done such noble service in so many plays. He should have an attractive personality, and a great deal of repose. While serving the dramatic purpose of "villain" in my play, this purpose is disguised by an outward charm and amiability.

The motive of the play was, I had flattered myself, to deal with the insincerity and frivolity of a certain class of medical practitioners, well-known in the metropolis. But of course I may have deceived myself in believing my comedy to have had any purpose whatever.

I wish to say in conclusion, that one other strong motive governed my printing this play, and that was the opportunity of adding a preface, a privilege that is denied the dramatist.

S. R.;



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

As first performed at the Boston Museum, August 17th, 1891.

STUYVESANT FILBERT, *A friend from the Club, (aged 37).*
MR. ROLAND REED.
ABRAM OAKS, *A wealthy merchant, (aged 45).*
MR. CHARLES A. SMILEY.
MAKEPEACE FRAWLEY, *A well-meaning old gentleman, (aged 60).*
MR. WILLIAM DAVIDGE.
MAXIMILIAN FRAWLEY, *His son, (aged 22).*
MR. WILLIAM FRIEND.
DR. PERCIVAL JARVIS, *A fashionable physician, (aged 40).*
MR. GEORGE F. NASH.
WILKINS, *Office boy to Dr. Jarvis.* MR. JULIAN REED.
MRS. OAKS, *Abram Oaks' wife, (aged 29).* MISS ISADORE RUSH.
SYLVIA, *Mr. Oaks' young sister and ward.* MISS PERCY HASWELL.
MRS. FRAWLEY, *The mother of Maximilian, (aged 50).*
MRS. MARY MYERS.
MABEL DOUGLAS, *(aged 16).* MISS EDNA WALLACE.
MOLLIE, *Maid at the Oaks'.* MISS GENEVRA INGERSOLL.

ACT I. Home of Abram Oaks.

ACT II. Home of Makepeace Frawley.

ACT III. Dr. Jarvis' Office.

ACT IV. Private parlor at Filbert's hotel.

TIME: THE PRESENT.

COSTUMES OF THE PRESENT DAY.

TIME IN PLAYING: TWO HOURS.



THE CLUB FRIEND
OR
A FASHIONABLE PHYSICIAN

ACT I.

SCENE: *Sitting-room at ABRAM OAKS'.*

DISCOVER: MOLLIE, a maid,—*emerging from*
MRS. OAKS' room R., and crossing as *Enter*
hurriedly, C. from L., MR. OAKS.

OAKS. Mollie, is Mrs. Oaks in her room?

MOLLIE. Yes, sir.

OAKS. (*Starting to go into room*). Very well.

MOLL. You mustn't go in there, sir!

OAKS. Why not?

MOLL. The doctor says she mustn't see nobody, sir.

OAKS. Which doctor?

MOLL. Doctor Jarvis.

OAKS. Why, what's the matter! Mrs. Oaks was all right
when I left her this morning!

MOLL. Yes, sir, but she was took with a spell of nerves
after you left this morning, and she sent for Doctor Jarvis.

OAKS. And he's forbidden her to see any one?

MOLL. Yes, sir.

OAKS. Any one except her husband, of course. (*Start-
ing to go again, Crossing R.*).

MOLL. No, you mustn't, sir ! He's more particular about her not seeing you than anybody else.

OAKS. (*In comic surprise*). Good gracious ! How extraordinary ! Not to see her own husband ! She must be very bad indeed !

MOLL. Doctor Jarvis says to me, says he. " Mollie, no one—do you understand me?—no one ! " " Not even Mr. Oaks ? " says I. " Him least of all," says he. " Lor ! " says I. " Yes," says he, " it would excite her more to see her husband than any one else," says he.

OAKS. You may go, Mollie.

MOLL. Of course, sir ; I am going to the drug-store to have a prescription made up. Doctor Jarvis is waiting for it.

OAKS. Doctor Jarvis is waiting ? Where is he waiting ?

MOLL. In there with Mrs. Oaks, sir.

(*Exit MOLLIE, C. D.*).

OAKS. (*Alone*). Well, this is rich ! This is very rich ! I must keep away from my wife and her nerves, while Percival Jarvis M. D., holds the fort in there. If I had to start life all over again I'd be a doctor and make nerve troubles a specialty ! (*Crossing L.*).

(*Enter SYLVIA through arch up L.*).

SYLVIA. Hello, Abram ! What brings you up from down town at this hour of the day ?

OAKS. Evelyn sent for me.

SYL. Oh !

OAKS. And now that I'm here she can't see me ! (*Sits on sofa L. C.*).

SYL. Why, what's the matter ?

OAKS. Doctor Jarvis.

SYL. What do you mean ?

OAKS. Evelyn has nerve trouble, and Doctor Jarvis won't let anybody see her.

SYL. Is Doctor Jarvis in there with Evelyn?

OAKS. Yes.

SYL. Oh, how lovely! (*Starts to run off, R.*).

OAKS. You mustn't go in there!

SYL. Oh, Doctor Jarvis won't mind me! He's the sweetest man!

OAKS. (*Gruffly*). I shouldn't wonder! I don't approve of sweet men.

SYL. (*Kneeling on chair and leaning over back of same*). No, Abram, if you had your way we'd all be treated by Doctor Flaxman. He belongs to your old school, and he gives us the nastiest doses to take, and such lots of them, and he's so rough, and he always hurts you when he feels your pulse. I hate him! Now Doctor Jarvis is just the sweetest, kindest, softest, gentlest man I ever saw. (*OAKS rises impatiently; crosses to mantle, R.*). When he feels your pulse he does it very tenderly, and he never prescribes anything that isn't simply delicious to take, and when he looks at you and smiles, you feel half cured before you get the medicine.

OAKS. Oh, indeed! You have evidently been treated by him.

SYL. Oh, lots of times. Doctor Jarvis has a way about him that—

OAKS. That's very nice. It's a lovely system. He makes himself so popular that he gets patients who have nothing the matter with them, so he never fails to cure them. (*Crossing to C.*). It's a lovely system.

(*Enter DR. JARVIS*).

SYL. Ah, Doctor! (*Runs to him, and takes his hand*).

DR. JARVIS. (*Very suavely*). Ah, Sylvia! (*Then greeting MR. OAKS*). Mr. Oaks!

OAKS. How do you do, Doctor.

DR. J. (*Crosses to OAKS; SYLVIA goes to mantel*). Mrs. Oaks will be able to see you in a little while. I thought it better during her acute attack for her to see no one. (*Starts up. Stops with sudden thought*). Oh—she tells me you had invited a club friend to dinner to-night. Of course, under the circumstances, it would be as well to put this dinner off.

OAKS. (*Disappointed*). I hope not, Doctor. Don't you think it would be possible to bring Mrs. Oaks round sufficiently to receive my friend this evening? Surely there can be nothing very seriously the matter with her, and—

DR. J. Everything in medicine is serious; we can't afford to ignore even the slightest premonitory symptoms—

OAKS. True—true! I wouldn't contradict you for the world. Sylvia, run in to Evelyn, give her my love, and tell her I will put my friend off for this evening. There, you see, Doctor, how regardful I am.

(*Exit SYLVIA R., running*).

DR. J. (*Smiles*).

OAKS. (*To DR. J., who is moving off*). By the way, Doctor, we haven't seen much of you at the club lately—you used to be the heart and soul of our monthly dinners. (*Sits in armchair by fireplace, R.*).

DR. J. Other duties, you know, Mr. Oaks.

OAKS. Oh, yes—very likely. But you fashionable doctors have so many other duties. A german one night—a whist party another—private theatricals another—I tell you medicine is branching out in many directions.

DR. J. (*Putting on glasses*). Always facetious, Mr. Oaks!

OAKS. You oughtn't to have missed last night's dinner. Mr. Stuyvesant Filbert, of San Francisco, held forth. You know Filbert, or Styve rather—everybody calls him Styve.

DR. J. I haven't had that pleasure.

OAKS. He's a new member, one of the brightest fellows in the club. He's the man I had invited to dinner. I hope Mrs. Oaks will change her mind, and you will allow me to have him.

(Enter SYLVIA, R.).

SYL. Evelyn's just doing up her hair. (*Crossing up to piano, L. C.*).

OAKS. (*Rising*). I know what that means—she's about to emerge. Well, good-bye, Doctor. Call soon again.

DR. J. (*Smiling*). Good-bye.

OAKS. I mean I hope she won't need you—that is——

DR. J. I shall look in on my way home and see how my patient is. (*Laughs*).

(Exit DR. JARVIS, C. to L.).

OAKS. (*At door*). Au revoir! A funny thing to say to a doctor—(*To SYLVIA, quickly*)—to any doctor but Doctor Jarvis, of course. (*Starts to go into MRS. OAKS' room.*)

SYL. (*Detaining him*). Oh, Abram, I want to speak to you a moment on my own account.

OAKS. Nothing serious?

SYL. No—more grotesque than serious. Listen. I was calling on Mrs. Frawley yesterday to report to her the number of tickets I needed for her charade next month, and I was introduced to a very singular gentleman.

OAKS. Singular!

SYL. That's the only word that fits him. He was just as charming as he could be, but he wasn't like any other gentleman. He took my hand the first minute I was introduced to him and held it for a moment and said: "What name?" "Oaks," said I. "No," said he, "are you sure?" "Sure of my own name!" I answered; "I think I am." "Remarkable!" he said; "just her eyes and her hair, too! How long has your name been Oaks? I mean," said he,

"how old are you?" I was just getting angry when he corrected himself, and said: "Pardon my bluntness, but you remind me very much of a lady I knew a dozen years ago."

OAKS. A dozen? How old was he?

SYL. Forty, maybe; he's a bachelor, just returned from California.

OAKS. (*Adding*). And he's very rich?

SYL. Yes.

OAKS. And he's slightly gray at the side?

SYL. Slightly.

OAKS. And his name is Filbert—Stuyvesant Filbert?

SYL. Stuyvesant—yes, Stuyvesant something. Mrs. Frawley called him Styve.

OAKS. (*Laughing*). Well—well—well! That is a coincidence! (*Crossing L. C.*).

SYL. You know him? (*He nods*). I am so glad! He's coming to see us.

OAKS. Did you invite him?

SYL. No. He didn't wait to be invited. "I'm going to call on this young lady," he said to Mrs. Frawley. "Are you?" said she. "Yes, and you are going to take me." "Am I; when?" said Mrs. Frawley. "As soon as you like," he said, and he's going to come. I am not so sorry now that you know him, but it was rather sudden, wasn't it?

OAKS. Not for Styve!

(*Enter MRS. OAKS, R; she is in a morning gown*).

OAKS. (*Joining her and putting her on divan, R.*). Ah, my dear, I'm glad you are able to be about. I was quite alarmed when I got your note. I hope you feel well enough to change your mind; you do, don't you, dear? You won't insist on my sending word to my friend *not* to dine with us this evening.

MRS. OAKS. I am sorry to disappoint you, my dear, but it will be impossible for this evening.

OAKS. That's too bad, too bad; you would have found him a most delightful companion. (*Crossing behind her to R.*).

(*Enter MOLLIE, C. from L.*).

MOLL. Mrs. Oaks, Mrs. Frawley is in the reception room.

MRS. O. Sylvia, go down to Mrs. Frawley and entertain her for a few minutes.

(*Exit SYLVIA, C., with maid.*).

OAKS. And is that your final decision about Mr. Filbert?

MRS. O. Yes, Abram. You had better send a message to his hotel at once; he may want to make another engagement for this evening.

OAKS. (*Going to L. of her, back of sofa.*) Very well, dear, if you think it best, but I must say I am disappointed.

MRS. O. Not more so than I am, dear, for, from what you tell me, I am sure I should have enjoyed Mr. Filbert's society very much; but, there is another thing to consider besides my indisposition—haven't you yourself been preaching economy to me? Haven't you told me that your investments might not yield all you had hoped, and that we had better be on the safe side?

OAKS. So I did, my dear, so I did; and you are a sweet wife to have remembered it too, but this once wouldn't have counted.

MRS. O. That's what you say every time, but there must come some once that does count. What is this I read in the papers this morning of the failure of Salvers & Co. in Chicago, and the possible embarrassment of many well-known New York firms?

OAKS. (*Crossing L.*). That's only newspaper talk, my dear. Salvors & Co are perfectly sound; there's nothing to worry about.

(*Enter SYLVIA, C. from L.*).

SYL. I brought Mrs. Frawley up, Evelyn; she could not wait.

(*Enter MRS. FRAWLEY, C. from L.*).

MRS. FRAWLEY. Ah, good afternoon, my dear! (*The ladies kiss*). How do you do, Mr. Oaks?—I hardly expected to find you home.

OAKS. No! Didn't expect it myself. I'm off, in fact, at once, just as soon as Mrs. Oaks tells me what to do. Send a note, you say, dear, and apologize?

MRS. O. Yes.

OAKS. (*Going up*). Very well; I'm sorry. Good afternoon.

(*Exit OAKS, C.*).

MRS. F. I won't detain you a minute, I only ran over to say—

MRS. O. Excuse me a moment. Sylvia, dear!

SYL. Yes, Evelyn.

MRS. O. Go and see if you can find me my silver thimble.

SYL. (*Aside. Crossing R.*). Her silver thimble! She knows I can't find it! That's just to get rid of me.

(*Exit SYLVIA, R.*).

MRS. O. (*To MRS. FRAWLEY, taking her L.*). I'm so glad you have come. I want to have a talk with you. I need your counsel, and I need it most urgently. (*They sit on sofa, L. C.*).

MRS. F. One thing at a time, dear. Let me tell you what I came for first. I haven't long to stay. Has Sylvia told you?

MRS. O. Told me what?

MRS. F. Oh, I see she hasn't. Well, the other day when Sylvia visited me, I presented a gentleman to her who has just returned from California. He's a bachelor, about forty; and do you know the dear old silly lost his heart to her in a minute; said she reminded him of a love of earlier days, and all that sort of thing. I laughed at him at first until I discovered he was in earnest. It is worth considering, my dear. He is wonderfully rich, and if Sylvia could learn to care for him by and by, it would make a splendid match.

MRS. O. The idea!

MRS. F. (*Rising*). I have stated the case, and my opinion, and there you are. (*Crossing to C.*).

MRS. O. But you haven't told me his name.

MRS. F. Haven't I? No more I have! It's Filbert—Stuyvesant Filbert.

MRS. O. (*Screaming*). Oh!

MRS. F. What's the matter?

MRS. O. (*Breathlessly*). Margaret—Margaret!

MRS. F. Do explain.

MRS. O. I told you when you came that I had something to say to you. Where shall I begin?

MRS. F. Anywhere, it doesn't matter. You know Mr. Filbert?

MRS. O. Know him! I've been in a state of hysterics about him all the morning. I've had to send for the doctor!

MRS. F. You puzzle me.

MRS. O. Margaret, come here. (*MRS. F. sits on chair by her side*). Only just now I instructed my husband to write a note to Mr. Filbert to cancel an engagement he had made with him to dine with us this evening.

MRS. F. Your husband knows him then?

MRS. O. Met him at the club.

MRS. F. Why didn't you want him to dinner?

MRS. O. I am coming to that. (*Slight pause, then with dramatic impressiveness*). Margaret, twelve years ago I was already in my teens.

MRS. F. Don't let that distress you. Twelve years ago I was out of mine.

MRS. O. Don't jest. Twelve years ago Mr. Filbert and I were—sweethearts.

MRS. F. Ah, I begin to understand.

MRS. O. No, you don't. He was only a boy. I have no doubt he was fond of me. It isn't difficult for a callow boy to be fond of almost any girl who is fairly good-looking, and I was fairly good-looking *then*.

MRS. F. You needn't breathe so heavily on the *then*.

MRS. O. But Mr. Filbert had nothing. He was secretary to some railroad director, and though I really was fond of him, I was easily persuaded by my parents that he was not to be regarded seriously. He took his dismissal very much to heart. He said he could not believe that these hazel eyes of mine could ever look with tenderness upon another.

MRS. F. Yes, Sylvia's eyes are hazel too!

MRS. O. Or that another hand should smooth my chestnut hair.

MRS. F. Yes, Sylvia's is chestnut too!

MRS. O. I am quoting him literally, for those were the last words he said to me, and so he went away to make his fortune in the West.

MRS. F. Which he appears to have done.

MRS. O. He had not been gone six months before I was married to Mr. Oaks. By degrees I forgot all about Mr. Filbert. I had not heard from him in all these years. Imagine then my surprise, not to say dismay, on being confronted with the prospect of meeting him at dinner in my

own home this evening. What would your nerves have done under similar circumstances?

MRS. F. Precisely what yours did; rebelled and sent for Doctor Jarvis.

MRS. O. The question now is, how to explain the situation to Mr. Filbert before he sets foot in the house.

MRS. F. (*Rising with sudden interest*). Before he sets foot in the house! In less than ten minutes he will set foot, in fact both feet, in this house. (*Going R.*).

MRS. O. What do you mean?

MRS. F. I mean that I agreed to meet him here at half-past four, and (*looking at clock*) it's now twenty-five minutes past.

MRS. O. (*Rising and going to her, C.*). What shall I do! What ever shall I do?

MRS. F. The usual thing. Nerves, and Doctor Jarvis!

(*Enter SYLVIA, running on.*)

SYL. Oh, Evelyn, he's at the door. I saw him get out of the cab!

MRS. O. (*Gasping*). Who?

SYL. Mr. Filbert. He saw me at the window—he nodded,—I nodded—and then——

MRS. O. (*Sternly*). Sylvia, have you found my thimble?

SYL. No.

MRS. O. (*Crossing to her*). Then find it before you do anything else.

SYL. But, Evelyn——

MRS. O. Do you hear me?

(*Exit SYLVIA, R., pouting.*)

MRS. F. It's all very well to keep that girl finding thimbles, but what are we to do with Mr. Filbert?

MRS. O. You must see him.

MRS. F. But what shall I say to him?

MRS. O. Anything!

(Enter MOLLIE, C., with card).

MRS. O. (*Anticipating maid without touching card*).
Yes, Mrs. Frawley will see him.

(Exit MOLLIE, C. as Enter SYLVIA, R.).

SYL. Here, Evelyn, I've found your thimble!

MRS. O. (*Nervously*). It isn't the right one,—come with me.

SYL. Why, it's the one you left on your dressing table.

MRS. O. (*Emphatically*). It is not the right one.

SYL. It's the one you always use.

(Exit MRS. OAKS and SYLVIA, R., protesting).

(MRS. FRAWLEY is alone, as she comes back to C.
Enter blithely STUYVESANT FILBERT.)

FILBERT. Ah, Mrs. Frawley! The maid said you would see me, but as she didn't say where, I concluded you meant up here. Singular coincidence, isn't it, that I should have two appointments the same day in the same house? When I accepted your invitation for this afternoon I had no idea I should be invited by Mr. Oaks to dinner this evening.

MRS. F. But you aren't.

FILB. What do you say?

MRS. F. You aren't invited by Mr. Oaks to dinner.

FILB. You must have misunderstood me, I said I was invited to dinner.

MRS. F. But it's off.

FILB. Who is?

MRS. F. It is.

FILB. I haven't heard of it.

MRS. F. But you will hear of it.

FILB. Will I? When?

MRS. F. Mr. Filbert, circumstances have arisen that have altered Mr. Oaks's programme for this evening. There is a note at your hotel now, containing Mr. Oaks's apologies and explanations.

FILB. Oh, very well. I'm sorry. I don't dine. Let's say no more about it. (*Going down L.*). I'm not here to dine *now* anyway.

MRS. F. No?

FILB. You know what I'm here for, of course.

MRS. F. Yes—but——

FILB. (*Turning to her suddenly*). Don't say that's off too!

MRS. F. It is.

FILB. What is?

MRS. F. Your appointment.

FILB. Off! Is there anything under the sun that's not off! Come now, Mrs. Frawley, no practical jokes!

MRS. F. Indeed I never was further from joking in my life.

FILB. Then produce your hazel eyes and chestnut hair, and the family ties thereunto pertaining.

MRS. F. There's a story I have to tell you first.

FILB. Is it long?

MRS. F. Long enough, and you will have to listen to it. (*She indicates for him to be seated*).

FILB. (*Sits on sofa, L.*). I am at your mercy—proceed.

MRS. F. To begin at the beginning. Twelve years ago you were twenty-five years old.

FILB. (*Business : Calculating—then suddenly*). Somebody must have told you.

MRS. F. Twelve years ago, somebody else who shall be nameless, was much younger.

FILB. Astonishing! I fancy many people were much younger twelve years ago.

MRS. F. But this particular party had hazel eyes and chestnut hair.

FILB. This is getting interesting.

MRS. F. About that time, an impetuous young man left the city for the West to make his fortune. Apparently he succeeded. The chestnut hair and the hazel eyes were married. Can you not foresee the denouement?

FILB. Go on. Tell it in your own way.

MRS. F. The hazel eyes and chestnut hair belong to the sister-in-law of—

FILB. (*Jumping up*). Not of my hazel eyes and chestnut hair!

MRS. F. Of yours. That is to say of the young lady in whom you have become so suddenly interested. (*Going over R.*).

FILB. (*Following her*). And I am now in the house of her who twelve years ago—that is to say—who married. And then—what's-his-name?—Oaks, is her father—no, husband. I am getting confused. For goodness sake, Mrs. Frawley, how has this sudden revelation been made?

MRS. F. Mr. Oaks invited you to dine here this evening. When Mrs. Oaks heard who you were, she had an attack of nerves, without letting Mr. Oaks know why, and your invitation as I have already told you, has been withdrawn.

FILB. Then I am now the invited but unwelcome visitor in the house of a gentleman who is my friend, a wife whose nerves I am too much for, and a sister with whom I am vainly striving to become acquainted. This is *decidedly* interesting.

MRS. F. I have done my duty in acquainting you with the circumstances. I am going—will you stay or will you come with me?

FILB. As between communing with the furniture and enjoying your charming society, there is only one choice. (*About to follow MRS. F. off C.*).

(Enter quickly SYLVIA, R.).

SYL. Oh, Mr. Filbert!

FILB. Miss Oaks.

SYL. You are not going, are you?

FILB. (To MRS. F.). Am I?

MRS. F. I am. (Starts to go up C.).

SYL. No, Mrs. Frawley, Evelyn wishes to see you.

MRS. F. Does she?

(Exit MRS. FRAWLEY into MRS. OAKS' room, R.).

FILB. (Finding himself alone with SYLVIA). Good afternoon, Miss Oaks.

SYL. Must you go?

FILB. (Not moving). Yes, I think so. I don't know why I should need the presence of Mrs. Frawley to justify my being in your company, but I feel like an intruder without her.

SYL. Why should you?

FILB. I hardly know—but the fact remains that I'm embarrassed.

SYL. Aren't you well?

FILB. Not particularly.

SYL. (Coming to him). Oh, that's too bad!

FILB. Don't let that worry you. I'm never particularly well.

SYL. What ails you?

FILB. I think a general attack of hazel eyes and chestnut hair.

SYL. You are jesting, Mr. Filbert. (Going down R.). It's unkind of you to make fun of me like this.

FILB. (Following her). I shouldn't dream of such a thing. I'm in earnest—dead in earnest. (Awkward pause). Where's Mrs. Oaks?

SYL. Shall I send her to you?

FILB. By no means. Miss Oaks, I know I must appear irrational to you and that my manner must surprise you; but I assure you after you have discovered the key to me, you will find me quite sane.

SYL. (*Sitting on divan, R.*). Then do give me the key at once!

FILB. I can't this minute.

SYL. In that case we shall probably find it difficult to carry on an intelligent conversation.

FILB. Then don't let us try. What's the use of an intelligent conversation? Let's have one that is not intelligent. It will be much more original.

SYL. Then why talk to *each other*. We can drivel to ourselves!

FILB. Oh, that wouldn't be the same thing at all. It is the charm of the other's presence that makes the mere speaking of words enjoyable to each.

SYL. How singular! I never thought of that before.

FILB. That's because you never realized your own charm.

SYL. You must stop saying these insincere things, Mr. Filbert.

FILB. (*Earnestly*). You have no right to call them insincere; they are much more sincere than I can possibly tell you; but some day, Miss Oaks, when I am laboring under a less confused idea of why I am here, I shall be able to convince you what an impression you have made upon me.

(*Enter MRS. FRAWLEY, R.*).

MRS. F. (*Crossing C.*). Mrs. Oaks is coming out to see you.

FILB. Indeed!

SYL. (*Aside, rising*). How awkward! He was making such a lovely speech, and there's no telling what it might have led up to. (*Goes up R.*).

(Enter MRS. OAKS, R.).

MRS. F. (*Introducing*). Mrs. Oaks, permit me to present to you my friend Mr. Stuyvesant Filbert.

MRS. O. (*Extending her hand*). How do you do, Mr. Filbert?

FILB. I am delighted, Mrs. Oaks.

MRS. F. I really must get home. Mr. Frawley will be indignant if I keep him waiting any longer. Good afternoon!

(*Bows to all, and Exits, C. to L.*).

MRS. O. Sylvia, find my thimble!

SYL. (*Muttering*). I'm sure she doesn't want her thimble, now!

MRS. O. Sylvia!

SYL. Yes, Evelyn. (*To MR. FILBERT*). You will excuse me for a moment, Mr. Filbert?

FILB. Certainly. That is—if necessary. (MRS. O. *starts R. to SYL.*).

SYL. Thimble, indeed!

(*Exit SYLVIA, R.*).

MRS. O. Since we are to meet again, it is as well that we should meet without embarrassment, and so I take this opportunity of welcoming you—as a friend of my husband—into my husband's house. (*Extending her hand*).

FILB. (*Taking it*). I thank you, Evelyn—I beg pardon, Mrs. Oaks. You always were tactful and charmingly direct. You have relieved me of considerable awkwardness. I might have been kept dangling about these premises for an indefinite period, but for your candor.

MRS. O. (*Indicating divan R.*). Do sit down.

FILB. May I? (*Crossing R.*). Thank you. (*Sits*). It won't do to make me feel too much at my ease; for it wouldn't be difficult for the old-time feeling—

MRS. O. (*Sitting in armchair L. of him*). Don't talk nonsense. It is many years since we met. Things have prospered with you?

FILB. Amazingly.

MRS. O. How nice! I like to hear of these nineteenth century Monte Cristos who make the world their own. I am sure you must have made yourself very popular at home.

FILB. Popular enough.

MRS. O. How lovely!

FILB. (*Extravagantly*). Not a bit! It's all hollow mockery! What is the benefit of a blaze of glory without, with a heart of ashes within! What are the triumphs of wealth and popularity to the defeat of a heart overthrown!

MRS. O. Do stop your nonsense!

FILB. That's twice you have said nonsense to me in two minutes. You haven't changed in these years. I never could make you understand how much I cared for you. When I would pour forth my molten passion to you, you would be counting the number of dots in my necktie.

MRS. O. That's because you never were serious.

FILB. It seems to be my fate never to be taken seriously. Once give a man the reputation for levity, and it's the most difficult thing in the world for him to be credited with one grave emotion. I am constantly reminding myself of Punchinello in the song—Punchinello, the maddest, merriest fellow, even when his heart is breaking.

MRS. O. Well, your heart isn't breaking, so the analogy fails.

FILB. You didn't care a dozen years ago whether it broke or not.

Mrs. O. Why will you insist on going back a dozen years!

FILB. (*Leaning towards her*). How can I help it in the presence of those hazel eyes and that chestnut hair!

MRS. O. You are treading on dangerous ground!

FILB. I love dangerous ground ! (*Thoughtfully*). And so you have a sister-in-law ? She too has hazel eyes and chestnut hair !

MRS. O. That seems to be a mania with you.

FILB. It's the early attack.

MRS. O. On dangerous ground again !

FILB. I'd like to pitch my tent on it !

MRS. O. (*Rises, crosses up L., laughing*). You are like the boy who loved to set off fireworks. It didn't hurt him, but it sputtered every one in the neighborhood with flying sparks.

FILB. (*Following her.*) Talking of flying sparks, what-ever became of that hated rival of mine, young—what was his name ?—who was studying medicine in those days ? Jarvis, I believe his name was ?

MRS. O. Oh, he's become quite a popular physician. A specialist for the nerves.

FILB. I hate specialists ; they are simply feeders of fads. I like a good all-round doctor, who unloads his physic on you, and then pulls out his stop watch, gambling on the result—kill or cure, in so many seconds.

MRS. O. How dreadful ! But you never liked Jarvis, even in the earlier days, I remember.

FILB. No. I never did.

MRS. O. I see you are prejudiced.

FILB. Yes ; against him and his class.

MRS. O. His class ! He's one of the most popular doctors in society.

FILB. That's just it ! It's your society doctor I hate ! Your dancing, singing, merry-making parlor physician !

MRS. O. How bitter you are.

FILB. I'll tell you some day an experience I had with one of them in San Francisco ; a man who—but pshaw ! (*Laughing*). Here I am letting my temper run away with me ! (*Pause*).

MRS. O. Mr. Filbert, your words have disconcerted me; I don't like you to hold such opinions about the class to which you say Doctor Jarvis belongs. He is a very dear friend of mine.

FILB. Then let us change the subject.

MRS. O. I have always found him intelligent, courteous and—and—sympathetic.

FILB. I knew it! Sympathetic! They are all sympathetic! That's the worst of them, confound them! What right has Doctor Jarvis to be sympathetic? (*In a tone of anger*).

MRS. O. Mr. Filbert, I don't understand your tone!

FILB. I beg your pardon. The old-time feeling of proprietorship overcame me. I forgot that I had been discharged for incompetency, and sent West for a change of manners. By the way—it's pretty nearly time for me to be taking my departure.

MRS. O. Oh, must you go! Can't you stay for dinner?

FILB. With a cancelled invitation waiting for me at my hotel? Hardly!

MRS. O. (*Rising*). You must let me show you my conservatory before you go. You always used to be interested in the plants I raised, and I have a lovely collection now—some gardenias that I am extremely proud of.

FILB. Indeed!

MRS. O. (*Going L.*). Yes, Doctor Jarvis sent them to me.

FILB. Doctor Jarvis again!

MRS. O. Come along, and don't be silly!

FILB. You wouldn't dare call me silly if you hadn't hazel eyes and chestnut hair!

(*Exeunt into Conservatory, L.*)

(*Enter OAKS, C. from L., followed by old FRAWLEY.*)

OAKS. (*Speaking*). Not now, Frawley! I am not in

the mood for it. I have no doubt your speculations will make a fortune for everybody concerned ; but I am not in the mood for speculation to-day.

FRAWLEY. Don't call it speculation, Oaks ! It's an investment ! It's like finding money !

OAKS. (*Sitting in armchair down R. C.*). That's what you said on forty-three different occasions. You've been finding money all your life, and in spite of that if it were not for Mrs. Frawley's income, I'd like to know what you'd be living on !

FRAW. Don't get personal, Oaks. I'm not to blame because my wife's well off !

OAKS. She wouldn't be if you could help it.

FRAW. Come now, Oaks. You haven't looked into this new scheme of mine. You don't know whether it's good or bad.

OAKS. Not to-day, Frawley. Not to-day. You know I left my office early to get away from business. I'm out of sorts.

FRAW. Why, what's the matter ? What has ruffled you ?

OAKS. A mere trifle—a mere nothing. I oughtn't to pay any attention to it, but human nature is weak, and I can't help it.

FRAW. Let me help you. You mayn't think much of me in business but you can't deny I've always been a friend to you !

OAKS. So you have, Frawley. I'll tell you what it is. I've received an anonymous letter. I've tried not to pay any attention to it, but it rankles.

FRAW. Hang an anonymous letter ! Throw it into the fire !

OAKS. That's what I did ! But I rescued it before it was quite destroyed.

FRAW. (*Going down R.*). It was about your wife, I presume.

OAKS. What makes you think it was about my wife? What makes you presume?

FRAW. Because I've had anonymous letters about *my* wife too. No man's wife is complete without them.

OAKS. (*Rising*). But I never received any before.

FRAW. Everything's got to have a beginning.

OAKS. Frawley, the scoundrel—for he is a scoundrel or he wouldn't be anonymous—has the impertinence to advise me to keep an eye on "some one who is very much interested in Mrs. Oaks." (*Takes letter and reads*). "You may not know him well yourself," he says, "but your wife knows him better than you do."

FRAW. That's what they said to me ten years ago. That's what they've been saying ever since—these anonymous correspondents. They made me miserable for the first two years. I set traps for every visitor that came to the house. I made my wife's life a burden to herself and me. The only one I caught in a trap was myself, and I finally concluded that if I was being deceived, it was being done so cleverly, that ignorance was gilt-edged bliss! Take the tip from me, dear boy. Don't you ever pay any attention to anonymous letters. Now about my plans for Window-Glass Insurance.

OAKS. I may not know him well myself, but my wife knows him better than I do!

FRAW. He may mean *me*! Oaks, I had your wife at the opera twice last week, when Mrs. Frawley couldn't come, and you were at the club!

OAKS. (*Going R.*). Don't be an ass, Frawley!

FRAW. (*Going L.*). Don't you be an ass, Oaks!

OAKS. (*At fireplace, R.*). Mrs. Oaks was very nervous this morning. Quite ill with nervousness. Too ill to receive a gentleman to dinner to-night, whom I had met at the club, and taken a great fancy to. I had to retract the invitation! One of the brightest, merriest chaps I ever saw!

Got all the boys laughing over his stories, and applauding his songs! I'd set my mind on a lovely evening, and Mrs. Oaks has a nervous attack and refuses to see him. Now somebody's given her trouble with her nerves! That's what this anonymous note means; and I'll find it out! Mark my words, I'll find it out!

(MRS. OAKS *is heard laughing in the conservatory*).

OAKS. Why, that's her laugh! (*Goes up*). And there she is in the conservatory with a visitor! (*Laugh*). Did you hear that, Frawley! In her delicate state of health having a good time in the conservatory! I wonder who he can be?

FRAW. I guess I'll be going!

OAKS. No, don't go, Frawley! I need you to sustain me! (*Looking off*). I know that man, Frawley. It's my friend. It's the man she didn't want to meet! It's the man who affected her nerves! Frawley, I see it all! What has brought that man into this house? He's the one my wife knows better than I do! Shall I blow his brains out, or shall I see him first?

FRAW. You had better see him before you blow his brains out.

OAKS. I'll write Mrs. Oaks a letter, and say farewell, and tell her I know all! I'm too nervous to write. (*Taking him to desk up R. C.*). Frawley, come here. Sit down, and write what I dictate.

(FRAWLEY *protests, but* OAKS *sits him down, hands him pen and stands over him*).

(*Enter* MRS. OAKS *with* FILBERT, *L.*).

MRS. O. (*To Filbert*). If you really must be going!

FILB. Why, it would be absurd to insist upon meeting Mr. Oaks at dinner to-night, after he has cancelled his invitation.

OAKS. (*Turning suddenly*). Not at all!

MRS. O. (*Surprised, but recovering*). Mr. Oaks!

OAKS. Yes, madam!

MRS. O. Why, then you can persuade Mr. Filbert to stay. I have been trying to do so. (*Going R.*). You'll excuse me, won't you, dear, while I get ready for dinner. Abram, dear, entertain Mr. Filbert, won't you!"

(*Exit MRS. OAKS, R.*).

OAKS. Entertain him! Frawley, we are to entertain him! Did you hear, Mr. Filbert—we are to entertain you!

FILB. That will be a very easy matter.

OAKS. Won't it? (*To FRAWLEY, who is trying to go up C.*). Don't go, Frawley!

FILB. You must be surprised to find me here.

OAKS. You haven't received my letter at your hotel?

FILB. No. I haven't been home since morning.

OAKS. Do you hear that, Frawley? He hasn't been home since morning!

FRAW. (*Dazed*). Not since morning!

OAKS. Frawley and I have just been talking about you. Haven't we, Frawley?

FRAW. Yes.

FILB. How delightful! Won't you introduce me? I think I have already had the pleasure of meeting *Mrs.* Frawley.

OAKS. Oh, don't you know Frawley? Funny! I thought you knew everybody,—or everybody's wife! Frawley, this is Filbert; Filbert, Frawley.

FRAW. }
FILB. } Delighted.

OAKS. So you're here! All the better! I didn't know you knew Mrs. Oaks, but you do I see. All the better.

FILB. Yes. The fact is, Mrs. Oaks and I are old acquaintances!

OAKS. Do you hear that, Frawley? Old acquaintances! All the better. Then you've got to stay for dinner.

FILB. You must really excuse me.

OAKS. No, but we won't excuse you—will we, Frawley?

FRAW. (*Dazed*). Perhaps Mr. Filbert has made other engagements.

FILB. That's it precisely—other engagements.

OAKS. Absurd! How can he have made other engagements! He knows he's been invited to dinner here, and he hasn't been home to find out differently.

FILB. But Mrs. Oaks has told me.

OAKS. She had no right to tell you anything. This is my house. Isn't it, Frawley? Do you hear me, Mr. Filbert? My house!

FILB. (*Aside*). The old gentleman is excited.

OAKS. And I mean to keep you here!

FILB. Keep me here?

OAKS. Yes—the whole evening.

FILB. The whole evening?

OAKS. Yes—and to-morrow!

FILB. Oh, no!

OAKS. And the next day! I shall have you under my eye all the time. (*Sees FRAWLEY about to go up C., grabs him.*) Don't go, Frawley! I need you here!

FRAW. My wife is waiting for me!

OAKS. That's all a man's wife is good for. Don't worry, Frawley, she won't be lonesome! Women never are, are they, Mr. Filbert?

FILB. Never in pleasant company.

OAKS. Ha! ha! That's good! Never in pleasant company. How's that, Frawley?

FRAW. Ha! ha! Never in pleasant company.

FILB. Mr. Oaks, you are excited about something. I should be a fool if I did not notice it. Won't you please give me some explanation?

OAKS. Excited! What an idea! Ha! ha! Now if you were a married man—but pshaw! You're not, don't you see! You don't know what it is to have a wife many years younger than yourself, and to have suddenly found out that——

FRAW. (*Interrupting*). Don't be a fool, Oaks, you are betraying yourself!

FILB. (*Aside*). He has heard something about his wife!

OAKS. Mr. Filbert, let me tell you at once, that I know all!

FILB. If you know all, you haven't much to learn.

OAKS. I'll tell him, Frawley. I'm no good at setting traps! Mr. Filbert, I received an impertinent letter this morning.

(*Enter MRS. OAKS, R.*).

FILB. From whom?

OAKS. I don't know, perhaps you can tell me. I'll read it to you. (*Reads letter*). "Keep an eye on some one who is very much interested in Mrs. Oaks. You may not know him well yourself, but your wife knows him better than you do." (*MRS. OAKS starts*).

FILB. And the letter is not signed?

OAKS. No.

FILB. May I see it? (*OAKS hands it to him*). An anonymous communication! And you have allowed that to prey upon your mind! There is only one thing to do with a note of this kind! (*He tears it into bits*).

OAKS. What do you mean?

FILB. (*Seizing his wrist*). I mean that you are seriously ill, and that you need a physician. (*Seats him on sofa down L., crossing in front of him to C.*).

(*Enter SYLVIA, L.*).

(SYLVIA sees picture, and joins her brother.
FRAWLEY also with him).

(Enter DR. JARVIS, C. from L.).

DR. J. Good evening! And how does my patient find herself this evening? (*Going R. to MRS. OAKS*).

FILB. (*In imperative tone*). Doctor Jarvis!

DR. J. (*In surprise*). Stuyvesant Filbert!

FILB. Your patient is there! (*Indicating OAKS*). I will attend to Mrs. Oaks.

(FILBERT goes to MRS. OAKS, and offers his arm, which she takes mechanically as the CURTAIN FALLS).

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE: Reception-room at MRS. FRAWLEY'S.

DISCOVER: MRS. FRAWLEY in evening dress, seated (in armchair, L. C.) reading. FRAWLEY, in dressing gown and slippers, pacing up and down stage nervously.

MRS. F. Makepeace, what on earth are you running up and down the room for?

FRAW. I am thinking, my dear; you know I always have to be moving when I think.

MRS. F. But, my dear, you have been moving all day long!

FRAW. It's been one of my thinking days!

MRS. F. Whatever have you got to think about?

FRAW. That's just like you, to ask such a question! I wonder who would do the thinking for the family if I didn't? (*Goes down R.*).

MRS. F. Makepeace, whether you stop thinking or not, do get some proper clothes on. Don't you know we are expecting friends?

FRAW. I am getting tired of these Friday evenings of yours, Margaret. (*Crossing to her*). What's the good of entertaining a lot of people who don't care a snap of their fingers for you, and only interrupt the current of your thoughts?

MRS. F. You'll find your evening clothes laid out for you on the chair. Your buttons and studs are put in; so you've nothing to do but make yourself look beautiful.

FRAW. (*Smiling*). I can't be cross with you, Margaret, and you know it. (*Kisses her*). But do enter a little more

into my projects, and give me a little more encouragement when I'm thinking out ways to make a fortune.

MRS. F. What use would we have for a fortune? We each have the other, that ought to be fortune enough!

FRAW. How beautiful, Margaret! But how unpractical! I need money, Margaret, and it keeps me moving and thinking where to raise it! (*Going down R.*).

MRS. F. I'm afraid you've raised more already than you can pay back!

FRAW. All the more reason to keep moving and thinking. (*Going up L.*).

MRS. F. I do hope you have not been borrowing?

FRAW. No, I haven't borrowed lately. That is to say, I don't call it borrowing if one's own son advances the needed capital.

MRS. F. One's own son! (*Rising*). What are you talking about, Makepeace? Maximilian hasn't been letting you have any money, has he?

FRAW. Well—yes, my dear—that is, a little.

MRS. F. Why, where has he been getting it from?

FRAW. Why, he gets a good salary from Mr. Oaks, a much better salary than I'd care to pay him, if I were Oaks!

MRS. F. You know that Mr. Oaks has employed Maximilian as much to oblige us, as anything else; for though we adore our son, we can't call him a brilliant boy—in fact——

FRAW. Maximilian is an empty-headed numbskull, with no more brains than a mosquito, though he is our son; but that is no reason why he shouldn't invest his capital with his father, if he wants to, is it?

(*Enter MAXIMILIAN, up R. C. a sapped-out specimen of a youth.*)

MAXIMILIAN. Good-evening, mother. (*Kisses her*).

MRS. F. Good-evening, Max.

FRAW. (*Sitting on ottoman, C.*). Where have you been since yesterday?

MAX. At the club.

MRS. F. All night?

MAX. Yep! Got betting with the boys whose lump of sugar a fly would light on first. Staid up till morning. All the flies lit on my sugar. I won eighty-four dollars.

MRS. F. (*Dismayed*). Up all night betting on flies! That was a thrilling occupation for a young man!

FRAW. But he won, Margaret!

MAX. Yes, I won. (MR. F. *rubs hands with satisfaction*). Then I bet the eighty-four dollars that I could jump over more chairs at once, than anybody else in the club.

FRAW. Yes—and you won—? (*Pause*).

MAX. And I lost.

FRAW. The whole eighty-four dollars?

MAX. At a clip.

FRAW. (*Rising*). You drivelling numbskull! You dough-headed specimen of a dodo! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? To let your hard-earned savings go out of your hands in that way?

MAX. But those eighty-four dollars were not hard-earned savings!

MAX. But they might have been!

MRS. F. (*Coming down R. C. to tête-à-tête*). But Maximilian, think of your health! If you stay up all night like this, and lose your sleep, what will become of you?

MAX. I don't lose my sleep. I stay in bed.

FRAW. How can you stay in bed down in the office?

MAX. I'm not down in the office.

FRAW. What does Mr. Oaks say to that?

MAX. He discharged me last week.

FRAW. (*Gasping*). Discharged you! Margaret, do you hear that? Discharged! And that's your boy, that's the boy you brought up!

MRS. F. He's the boy you took to your club and got elected. He hasn't been fit for anything since the day he became a member. (MAX *has gone down L. C. and leans against table*).

FRAW. Would you mind telling me, young man, what you intend to do with yourself, now that you have been discharged?

MAX. I don't know. Something will come along.

FRAW. Will it?

MAX. I've saved a little money, and some of the boys at the club will invest it for me.

MRS. F. (*Pleased, R.*). So you have saved a little money, have you, Max?

MAX. Yes, mother.

MRS. F. Where is it?

MAX. Father has it.

FRAW. Is that *all* the money you have?

MAX. Every cent!

FRAW. (*Hopeless*). And you call that saved! (*Turning to her*). Margaret, what have I ever done to you that you should have made me father such a specimen as this!

MRS. F. Don't abuse him, Makepeace; you've no doubt told him yourself that you were saving it for him.

MAX. He did, mother.

FRAW. But he believed it! That's what drives me wild! He believed it! (*Recollecting himself*). I mean — of course he believed it! But what right had he to get himself discharged? To lie in bed all day and neglect his work, until Mr. Oaks had to get rid of him. That is unpardonable!

MAX. I didn't lie in bed all day until after I had been discharged.

MRS. F. What do you mean, Maximilian? (*With a gesture of impatience MR. F. goes up C.*).

MAX. Mr. Oaks came to me last week, and said:

"Maximilian, as you are aware, our firm has met with severe losses; and I am compelled to cut down expenses. One book-keeper will have to do. We shall have to let the assistant go. I'm sorry, more especially as I have only words of praise for you, for the faithful and conscientious way in which you have always performed your duties."

FRAW. Mr. Oaks said that to you?

MAX. Last week.

MRS. F. Why didn't you mention it?

MAX. He told me the firm's condition in strict confidence, so I thought I'd think it over, before speaking of it.

FRAW. So you thought it over in bed?

MAX. Yes, father.

MRS. F. (*Pause*). Don't scold him, Makepeace, he's done nothing wrong. It's a matter of much more importance that Mr. Oaks is embarrassed. I hope it's nothing alarming.

(*Enter SYLVIA, L.*).

SYL. Good-evening.

ALL. Good-evening, Sylvia.

SYL. Mrs. Frawley, (*going over to her*) Evelyn says she will drive over later.

MRS. F. Very well, my dear. Makepeace, do make yourself presentable.

FRAW. All right, my love. (*Starts to go off into his room*).

MAX. (*Intercepting him*). Father, just a moment. (*Bringing him down*). When do I get that money?

FRAW. Next month! (*Starting R.*).

MAX. (*Detaining him*). Father, don't you think I had better break off my engagement with Sylvia?

FRAW. I never knew you were engaged.

MAX. Very nearly engaged.

FRAW. Do as you please about that. (*Starting R.*).

MAX. (*Detaining him*). She might be very much in love with me, and I don't want to break her all up.

FRAW. No fear of that! (*Starting R.*).

MAX. And besides——

FRAW. *You* are very much in love with *her*.

MAX. I was, but——

FRAW. Yes—well.

MAX. I've learnt to love another!

FRAW. You're an ass!

(*Exit FRAWLEY, R. 1 E.*)

(*During the above, SYLVIA and MRS. F. have come down R. C., conversing.*)

MRS. F. (*Rising to go*). Tell him yourself, Sylvia, that's the best way.

(*Exit MRS. FRAWLEY, R. 1 E.*).

(*Both MAX and SYLVIA remain awkward for a minute.*)

MAX. Sylvia!

SYL. Maximilian!

MAX. I've got something to say to you.

SYL. And I have something to say to you.

MAX. It concerns us both.

SYL. It concerns you and me.

MAX. I used to think——

SYL. So did I!

MAX. But I've concluded——

SYL. So have I!

MAX. Of course everybody has a right to change his mind.

SYL. That's what a person's mind is for.

MAX. That never occurred to me. Very likely.

SYL. I never really gave you any encouragement—did I, Max?

MAX. Well, I can't say that, Sylvia!

SYL. But you must, if you want to speak the truth.

MAX. Well, you can't say that I really offered.

SYL. (*Quickly rising*). Offered what?

MAX. (*Calmly, after a pause*). I don't know.

SYL. Offered what? Who asked you to offer anything? Did you dare to presume, because I listened to a few silly flattering remarks of yours, that I gave you sufficient encouragement to offer me anything under the sun, sir! How dare you have the impertinence to begin your sentence by saying you didn't really offer—

MAX. (*Perplexed*). That wasn't what I wanted to say.

SYL. You will please then, Mr. Frawley, confine yourself henceforth to saying what you want to say.

MAX. I don't want to say a word—I want to listen.

SYL. In that case, let me state briefly, as follows: all is over between us. (*A pause.*)

MAX. Thank you.

SYL. What do you mean, sir?

MAX. I mean I'm sorry. Sorry, but I'm resigned. I didn't think you'd give me up without a struggle, but you do give me up; and you don't struggle, so I thank you. I presume you have learnt to love another.

SYL. What business is that of yours?

MAX. Nothing. Only, so have I.

SYL. Love another? And who is she, pray?

MAX. I don't see—

SYL. That's right! Get impertinent, and tell me it's none of my business!

MAX. (*Going to her*). I won't tell you who she is, but I'll show you her picture.

SYL. Oh, it's got as far as that has it! You carry her picture about with you!

MAX. Yes. (*Taking picture slowly from his pocket*).

SYL. Let me see! (*Grabbing it quickly*). Why! You great big story teller! *Her* picture! It's a man's picture!

MAX. Is it?

SYL. (*Laughing*). Why, this is a picture of Mr. Stuyvesant Filbert! How did you come by that?

MAX. (*Looking at picture*). Filbert's picture! Ha! ha! I *am* a ninny! I took up the wrong picture in a hurry. (*He takes it back*).

SYL. (*Working herself up into a passion*). How did that photograph come into your possession?

MAX. I found it on the mantelpiece of the young lady I was calling on. She knows Filbert very well. He's a rival of mine in her affections; but he's too old for her.

SYL. He's not too old for anybody! (*Goes down L.*).

MAX. (*C.*). Yes, he is for *her*! She says she loves him as a father, I tell her I've no objection to that.

SYL. *You* have no objection indeed!

MAX. No. Have you?

SYL. (*Coming to him*). I don't believe a word of what you are saying to me. I don't believe you got Mr. Filbert's picture off any girl's mantelpiece, and I don't believe Mr. Filbert gave any girl his picture to put on her mantelpiece; and I don't want you ever to speak another word to me as long as you live! (*SYLVIA flounces up stage*).

(*Enter FILBERT, L. 1 E.*).

FILB. Ah! Good-evening.

MAX. Good-evening, Mr. Filbert, we were just talking about you.

FILB. Go on then. You couldn't talk about anything that would so chain my attention. (*Sits in an armchair, L. C.*).

MAX. I was just showing this photograph to Miss Oaks. (*Shows it to FILBERT*).

SYL. (*Coming down C.*). Which he took off a young lady's mantelpiece.

FILB. (*Severely*). How does that photograph come into your possession?

SYL. That's what I should like to have explained.

FILB. (*Business of MAX, looking from one to the other*). Then you are the young man she told me about. I want to have a serious talk with you by-and-by.

MAX. Really?

FILB. Yes, really. In the meanwhile I'll keep this picture, if you don't mind. I can't afford to have myself in circulation so promiscuously. It might make me too popular.

MAX. If you don't need me any longer, Miss Oaks, I'll go?

SYL. *Need you! Need you!* What word is there in the English language to express the opposite of need?

FILB. Needless!

SYL. *Need-less!* I don't need *any* of him!

MAX. Thank you!

(*Exit MAX, C. to L.*).

SYL. And if it's all the same to you, I'll leave also. (*Starts up L. C.*).

FILB. Don't run away on my account I beg. (*Opens album*).

SYL. The guests are in the drawing-room.

FILB. Yes, I know. I came here to escape them. (*Listlessly turning over the leaves of album*).

SYL. (*Aside, getting up C.*). He doesn't care the snap of his fingers for me, and I know it.

FILB. (*Aside*). If Jarvis comes here to-night, will it be wise for me to speak to him?

SYL. (*Aside*). He doesn't pay the slightest attention to me, and last week he was all eyes and ears in my presence.

FILB. (*Aside*). I will speak plainly to Mrs. Oaks first. I can surely rely on her intelligence.

SYL. (*Aside*). I'll take my glove off and drop it. If he picks it up and keeps it, it will be a sign he cares for me. (*Taking off her glove*).

FILB. (*Aside. Rising and coming C.*). Mrs. Oaks has all the thoughtlessness of innocence, but I cannot bear to see her compromise herself, without wanting to warn her; and yet, how can I, how can I?

(SYLVIA *has crossed to the chair where he had been sitting, and drops her glove in the chair. He returns to the chair, and passing SYLVIA, accidentally pushes against her*).

FILB. I beg your pardon! Are you still here?

SYL. Yes. But I'm going now. (*Starting up C.*).

FILB. Won't you let me know when Mrs. Oaks arrives, Sylvia, I want to see her.

SYL. Certainly. Good-evening.

FILB. (*Vacantly*). Good-evening.

(*Sylvia does not go off but stands at back, eagerly watching his movements.*)

FILB. (*Going to chair, L.*). Perhaps I had better tell Mrs. Frawley the whole story of Jarvis. (*Vacantly picks up glove*).

SYL. (*Aside*). He has picked it up!

FILB. (*Slapping the palm of his hand with the glove as he speaks*). If one could only do one's duty for duty's sake and not let sentiment creep into it! But that is the fatality of those hazel eyes, and that chestnut hair!

(*FILBERT draws the glove through his hand sentimentally*).

SYL. (*Aside*). He's treating it tenderly! He'll kiss it in a moment!

FILB. (*Crossing to C.*). Under their spell I am pledged to her service. I'm a fool! Every man is, who mixes himself up in another's affairs! But Jarvis must be called to account by somebody, and, by Jove! I'll do it—if I have to slap his face. (*Throws glove off in anger. SYLVIA has come down L. C. slightly*).

SYL. (*Screams*).

FILB. (*Startled*). What's the matter?

SYL. That's my glove!

FILB. I beg your pardon! (*Hastens to pick up glove, hands it to her, he still holding on to the other end*).

SYL. Thank you. I'll take it, please.

FILB. (*Sentimentally*). The same hazel eyes! The same chestnut hair!

SYL. Oh, bother my hazel eyes! Do you understand me?—and bother my chestnut hair!

(*Exit SYLVIA angrily, L. 2 E.*).

FILB. Certainly, if you insist on it. Bother your chestnut hair. I don't want to bother it—but if you insist—Why has the miniature angel risen in its wrath? What have I done? (*Turning R.*).

(*Enter MRS. FRAWLEY, R.*).

MRS. F. Good-evening, Mr. Filbert.

FILB. Good-evening.

MRS. F. I am so glad you have come! Nobody is so amusing as you.

FILB. That's very kind of you, but it's libellous.

MRS. F. You are always so droll!

FILB. (*Gloomily*). Thank you.

MRS. F. Do you know, I just like to sit and listen to you, without paying the slightest attention to what you say. It just amuses me to hear you prattle.

FILB. How flattering! It strikes me I have chosen a bad time to talk seriously with you,

MRS. F. *You talk seriously!* (*Laughing*). Now don't belie your magnificent reputation of being unable to.

FILB. I am reeking with seriousness at the present moment, and I decline to be trifled with.

MRS. F. (*Crossing L.*). At the present moment I am determined that you shall come into the music-room and sing something for us; I positively forbid you even to attempt to be serious!

FILB. But I won't sing!

MRS. F. And disappoint a whole room full of people who have heard of you!

FILB. No matter what they have heard of me I am innocent!

(DR. JARVIS *heard off L., laughing*).

FILB. Wasn't that Doctor Jarvis?

MRS. F. I shouldn't wonder.

FILB. I want to talk to you seriously about Doctor Jarvis.

MRS. F. Not to-night—not to-night. (*Goes up—looks off L.*).

(*Enter FRAWLEY, R. & E. He comes down very cordially to FILBERT*).

FRAW. Here you are, my dear Mr. Filbert! (*Shaking both hands*). May I call you Stuyvesant? I *will* call you Stuyvesant! I hope you don't hold me answerable for Mr. Oaks's eccentric demeanor towards you the other day. I am very glad indeed to see you here this evening. I want to have a chat with you.

FILB. A serious one I hope.

FRAW. Precisely. Serious.

FILB. Thank goodness there's somebody serious!

MRS. F. (*Reprovingly*). Makepeace! A serious talk this evening!

FRAW. Serious—and business!

MRS. F. (*Coming down L.*). I hope, Makepeace, you don't mean to talk business to Mr. Filbert this evening.

FRAW. Business is always in order. Don't you think so, Mr. Filbert?

(*Enter DR. JARVIS and MRS. OAKS, L. 2 E.*).

MRS. O. Good-evening.

THE OTHERS. Good-evening. (MRS. F. *meets them up C.*).

MRS. F. (*To MRS. O. and DR.*). Mr. Filbert is coming into the music-room.

FRAW. (*Going L. with him*). No—the smoking-room.

MRS. F. (*To MRS. O. and DR.*). He's going to sing for us!

FILB. Am I?

FRAW. Not until I've had my business talk with him!

FILB. Talking about business, at what time to-morrow would it be convenient for *you* to see *me*, Doctor Jarvis?

DR. J. Would three o'clock suit you?

FILB. Very well indeed. (*To MRS. FRAWLEY*). And now I am at your disposal. (*To MR. FRAWLEY*). Or yours. Either or both! (*They both lock arms with him*).

(*Exeunt chatting, L. 1 E.*).

MRS. O. (*To JARVIS going R.*). And what is the objection you say you have to Mr. Filbert?

DR. J. I don't like the interest you show in him. It disconcerts—it distresses me!

MRS. O. (*Sitting on tête-à-tête, laughing*). What nonsense you are talking! How can it concern you, as my physician, whom I take an interest in?

DR. J. Why will you persist in reminding me of my office as your physician? (*Coming to her*). Have I no rights as a friend?

MRS. O. No right to permit you to dictate my choice of other friends.

DR. J. You forget that no other friend can care for you as I do.

MRS. O. (*Looking up at him curiously*). This is something new! Since when has this sudden care arisen?

DR. J. Since when? Have you been blind all these months to a devotion I have taken no pains to conceal?

MRS. O. Has your devotion been more than I had a right to expect from my physician?

DR. J. Much more.

MRS. O. You surprise me. I beg of you, then, to turn over a new leaf at once. I have no right, and certainly no desire, to claim more of your interest than is due a confiding patient.

DR. J. Evelyn, it is too late to recede. You know it is not as my patient that I have learnt to look upon you with such fervor; it is as my ideal, my love.

MRS. O. (*Rising slowly*). Doctor Jarvis!

DR. J. Have I not given you every proof of my sincerity?

MRS. O. Proof? Proof?

DR. J. Have you ever appealed to me for assistance when I was not willing and ready to render it?

MRS. O. I do not know to what you refer.

DR. J. It is only a trifling matter I admit, but did I not yesterday, when you came to me and confessed the financial embarrassment of your husband, instantly respond?

MRS. O. I came to you in all honesty and told you that I had offered to turn over to my husband my personal property, amounting to some ten thousand dollars, which he declined to accept. You did not hesitate to lend me the money on those securities.

DR. J. *Not* on those securities.

MRS. O. I gave you my note——

DR. J. Which I destroyed in your presence.

MRS. O. (*Crossing to C.*). Had I foreseen that the obligation to you would entail upon me others that you seem to hint at, do you think for a moment that I should have come to you with my confession ?

DR. J. I hope so, for you must have felt how delighted I was to serve you !

MRS. O. You were serving my husband.

DR. J. (*Smiling*). No doubt ! But surely you are not unsophisticated enough in this selfish world, not to know that helping a husband through the wife, is a service that far transcends mere business.

MRS. O. (*Sitting on ottoman—back to him*). You are growing more and more difficult to understand.

DR. J. (*After a slight pause, during which he approaches her with a show of fervor,—then with increasing warmth.*) Evelyn, I love you. There is nothing I would leave undone to win you ; I may have deceived myself in supposing that you had understood me all along, but as I have told you already, it is too late to recede. There is hardly a folly—Heaven help me !—there is hardly a crime, I could not justify to myself, if by committing it, it would draw me nearer to you. Do you know why I sent that anonymous letter to your husband ?

MRS. O. (*Aghast*). You sent it !

DR. J. Yes I—in the hope that if our names were linked together, even in the mouth of gossip, I should feel a possession of you, different from any I had yet known.

MRS. O. Doctor Jarvis ! (*In a tone of anger and contempt*).

DR. J. I have laid myself bare to you, because I love and trust you !

MRS. O. Not another word ! I have duties before me—immediate and imperative. The money you loaned me yesterday must be returned to you at once. Every second that

this debt is unpaid, adds to my disgrace and the guilt I feel in having accepted it. I will bring those ten thousand dollars to your office to-morrow at three. That debt once paid (*going up to C.*) never dare to enter my presence again!

DR. J. Where will you get ten thousand dollars to-morrow?

MRS. O. (*In arch up C.*). That is my affair!

(*Exit haughtily C. to L.*).

DR. J. (*Alone*). And she will do it, too! And I shall have failed! She will bring that money to me herself, for she will let no one else share the secret. Where will she get it from? (*Goes to desk R. and takes up pen to write*). Filbert will be at my office at three to-morrow! (*Writes*). "Dear Mr. Oaks. She will meet him at Dr. Jarvis' office at 3 to-morrow." (*Folds and seals the letter. Starts L.*). I must see that this is mailed to him at once.

(*Exit, L.*).

(*Enter FILBERT and MAXIMILIAN, L. 2 E., conversing*).

FILB. And so you are sure that little Mabel Douglas, who gave you my picture in mistake for her own, cares for you?

MAX. No, I'm not sure she cares for me, but I'm quite sure she will care for me, after you are out of the way.

FILB. Am I in the way?

MAX. Yes. She told me she never could care for anybody as much as for you; now I think you are much too old to care for her yourself, and you might give me a chance.

FILB. Quite right. (*Sitting C.*). It's time a man of my age let the girls alone, I'm thinking, anyhow!

MAX. That's so!

FILB. And you love her?

MAX. (*Sitting*). You bet! Who can help loving her?

FILB. Have you told her so?

MAX. No. I haven't. Some fellows can talk, I can't. Father says I'm an ass.

FILB. Your father ought to know.

MAX. I just sit still in her presence and look at her picture. That's how she came to offer to let me have it. I was so happy I took the wrong one by mistake.

FILB. Oh, it's as bad as that, is it ! There's always hope for a man who can't speak when he's in love. If he could talk, it wouldn't be half so sincere.

MAX. I'm awfully glad to hear you say so. If it would only prove to her how much I love her, I would hold my tongue for a month.

FILB. How are you fixed, in case she wanted to marry you ?

MAX. That's the trouble. I've loaned my money to father.

FILB. Loaned it to your father ? On what security ?

MAX. He didn't give me any.

FILB. (*Sitting in arm chair L. C.*). You are a bad business man.

MAX. But he's my father !

FILB. That's not negotiable collateral.

MAX. The first thing to do, is to get the girl to be willing to wait.

FILB. She might get wrinkled !

MAX. No. I'm able to work. I'm not such a fool as father thinks I am. (*Getting to back of table*). Now I had a nice position with Mr. Oaks, until he was compelled to let me go.

FILB. Compelled to let you go ! Who compelled him ?

MAX. Why, it's like this. If I tell you something in confidence, you won't give me away ?

FILB. Not unless I must.

MAX. Mr. Oaks was financially embarrassed, and he had to get rid of me.

FILB. Mr. Oaks financially embarrassed !

MAX. And he cut down expenses.

FILB. And you were one of the expenses ?

MAX. Father says I was a luxury.

FILB. Mr. Oaks embarrassed, and she never mentioned it ! (*Aside.*)

MAX. If I'm good enough to earn a salary in one place, I'm good enough to earn one in another.

FILB. Right you are !

MAX. And if Mabel Douglas will give me time——

FILB. (*Rising*). Mabel Douglas shall give you time. Leave that to me.

MAX. (*Joyfully*). What do you mean ?

FILB. I don't know yet. Hope ! (*Going down C.*). There is no harm in hoping.

MAX. Tell her I'll save my money, and I'll give up the club. I hate the club anyway. I can't play billiards, I never can smoke without feeling dizzy, the drinks give me a headache, and sitting up at night makes me bilious, and that's all the club's good for. I only joined it because father proposed me.

FILB. Then you *were* an ass !

MAX. All I want is a little time.

FILB. If you'll send your father to me I'll be much obliged.

MAX. Thank you, sir. If father should call me names, don't pay any attention to him, will you ? (*Going L.*).

FILB. Not at all. I'll remind him that he was a boy once himself, and that you'll be a father some day.

MAX. Oh, thank you !

(*Exit Max. L. 1 E.*).

FILB. (*Alone*). Oaks embarrassed ! Surely Evelyn knows about it, and has said nothing. I wonder if she would come to me if they were in trouble, and remember that there is nothing under the sun I wouldn't do for her.

But how can I serve her, without complicating the already strained relations that exist between her husband and myself?

(Enter MRS. OAKS excitedly, C. from L.).

MRS. O. (*Coming down quickly to him*). Mr. Filbert!

FILB. Mrs. Oaks!

MRS. O. Stuyvesant!

FILB. Evelyn!

MRS. O. Ever since I have known you, you have been my friend.

FILB. Ever since I've known you I've tried to be.

MRS. O. I didn't realize the other evening the true motive that made you warn me against Doctor Jarvis. I fancied it was the old animosity; but my eyes have been opened since.

FILB. Those hazel eyes!

MRS. O. If I ask you to do me a great favor, and tell you that I ask it in order that I may set myself free forever from the influence of this man, do you think you could grant it without asking more information than I am willing to give?

FILB. I would grant any favor you ask, and the greater the service the happier I shall be in rendering it.

MRS. O. Thank you, Stuyvesant, you are as generous as you are noble.

FILB. I wish you had found that out years ago!

MRS. O. I did find it out.

FILB. But you forgot to mention it.

MRS. O. To come directly to the point, I am in debt to Doctor Jarvis.

FILB. In debt to him!

MRS. O. To the amount of ten thousand dollars.

FILB. I'd rather be in debt to the —; it's the same thing. You must get out of debt this minute.

MRS. O. You divine then the great favor I would ask of

you? I have in personal property and securities, the value of about ten thousand dollars. These I wish you to convert for me into cash without a moment's delay.

FILB. One moment—one moment—let me understand. What did you do with the money Doctor Jarvis loaned you?

MRS. O. I gave it to my husband.

FILB. Can't your husband give it back?

MRS. O. Impossible! Immediately on receiving it he wired the money to Chicago. The whole future of his affairs hinged upon that sum, that was needed before nightfall by his correspondents in the West.

FILB. Where did you tell him you got it from?

MRS. O. I told him the truth. I told him it was loaned to us by Doctor Jarvis.

FILB. And he suspected nothing?

MRS. O. He had nothing to suspect, no more than I had when I accepted the loan. We both believed in his friendship.

FILB. My entire bank account is at your disposal, Mrs. Oaks. That is the simplest part of the difficulty that confronts us. How can I serve you without further embarrassing you?

MRS. O. I don't follow you.

FILB. (*Crossing L. thinking*). I must not appear in this matter. As it is, Mr. Oaks views me, as you know, very much in the light of an intruder. Give me ten minutes time in which to mature a plan, and I promise you, all shall be as you desire.

MRS. O. Oh, Stuyvesant! (*Extends her hand*). You will never know how much I appreciate your kindness in this hour.

FILB. I don't want to know. It would only complicate things worse than ever.

MRS. O. In ten minutes then——

FILB. I will see you.

MRS. O. (*Going up C.*). Bless you, Stuyvesant!

FILB. (*Going L.*). As you say—bless me, Stuyvesant.

(*Enter FRAWLEY, L. 1 E.*).

MRS. O. (*Seeing him, and changing manner*). Ah, Mr. Frawley, where is your wife? I'm looking for her.

FRAW. There she is saying good-bye to Doctor Jarvis.

(*Exit MRS. OAKS, L. 1 E.*).

FILB. (*Realizing FRAWLEY'S presence*). Confound it! I'd forgotten all about him.

FRAW. Mr. Filbert, my son tells me you have something to say to me.

FILB. So I have, something very important. (*Aside*). Hang me if I remember what it was.

FRAW. (*Sitting on ottoman, C.*). As a rule my son's an ass, and I don't pay any attention to him.

FILB. That's just it. It's about your son. It grieves me very much to have him considered an ass.

FRAW. Oh, it does, does it?

FILB. And there should be some remedy for it.

FRAW. No doubt.

FILB. I am convinced your son has great abilities, they only want to be developed.

FRAW. No doubt. I suppose if he were locked up in a hot house with plenty of fertilizer he'd develop one way or another—but I can't afford the hot house, and I'm out of fertilizers.

FILB. By Jove! I've got both the hot house, and the fertilizer.

FRAW. I don't understand you.

FILB. *I'm* the hot house, and *you're* the fertilizer.

FRAW. (*Indignant,—rising*). Sir!

FILB. (*Putting him down*). I mean, *you're* the hot house, and *I'm* the fertilizer.

FRAW. (*Looks at him dazed,—rising*). Good-evening!

FILB. (*Putting him down again*). Don't go—it's all right. You'll understand in a minute. I want to make you a plain up and down proposition. You can accept it, or you can decline it, but you've got to do it quick.

FRAW. Fire away.

FILB. I want to go in with you on a scheme for making some money.

FRAW. (*Changing his manner*). At last!

FILB. (*Sitting on ottoman by his side*). I know that a man like you, with a brain so full of projects, must be wide-awake, and it's your wide-awakeness that has caught me. Have I your ear?

FRAW. You have.

FILB. I want to build up the house of Abram Oaks, and I want to build it up through you.

FRAW. Through me?

FILB. I want you to go into partnership with Mr. Oaks.

FRAW. Me?

FILB. You told me in the smoking-room a while ago, that you had had business talks with Mr. Oaks, and that he had told you, when you had money to invest, to come to him, and he'd give you all the opportunity you wanted.

FRAW. Yes—but——

FILB. Now's your time!

FRAW. Whose time? What do you mean?

FILB. As Mr. Oaks's business is not as prosperous as it has been, he will certainly entertain a proposition of partnership from a man who is willing to invest fifty thousand dollars.

FRAW. Good Lord!

FILB. I want you to invest fifty thousand dollars with Mr. Oaks.

FRAW. Me?

FILB. Yes—at once.

FRAW. You're dreaming!

FILB. Not at all.

FRAW. I haven't got fifty thousand cents!

FILB. I didn't suppose you had. But you're going to have.

FRAW. I'm going to have a fit, if you don't come to earth.

FILB. I'm going to give you fifty thousand dollars.

FRAW. (*Rising*). What!!

FILB. Now keep cool, and let me explain. You are to represent *me*. With your business head, this money in a firm of as long standing as Mr. Oaks's ought to be a profitable investment. You are to be responsible to me for fifty per cent. of your share of the profits. You don't doubt you can secure a partnership with Mr. Oaks?

FRAW. Doubt it! He'll fly at it! I'll show him how the much despised Frawley can come to his rescue at the critical moment.

FILB. Certainly you will; and you can pay back the money you borrowed of Maximilian.

FRAW. In a flash, sir—in a flash! I'll teach that impertinent brat to dare dun his father for a few measly hundreds.

FILB. Measly hundreds indeed!

FRAW. When do I take hold? I mean—when do you—

FILB. Hold on! There are other conditions!

FRAW. Oh!

FILB. But I think you will comply with them.

FRAW. (*Grasping his arm and taking him down R. C.*). Of course I will. What are they?

FILB. In the first place I must not appear in this deal at all. Mr. Oaks doesn't like me, and I must be kept in the background, until he doesn't shy at the sight of me; but before we do anything else, we must pay back Doctor Jarvis ten thousand dollars that we borrowed from him.

FRAW. Did we borrow ten thousand dollars of Jarvis?

FILB. We did, very foolishly. Jarvis is the kind of man to go and talk about it, and the quickest way to shut his mouth is to pay him the money.

FRAW. That's my idea exactly.

FILB. Now when we buy in fifty thousand dollars worth with Oaks we can give him Jarvis's receipt for ten thousand, and forty thousand in cash, can't we?

FRAW. (*Grasping arm again*). Why, of course we can—in a flash—in a flash!

FILB. Let's start at once.

FRAW. Eh?

FILB. Draw a check this minute for ten thousand, and nail Jarvis! (*Business, starting R. to desk; stopping, turning back*).

FRAW. Eh?

FILB. Why do you hesitate? You can certainly draw a check?

FRAW. I can summon spirits from the vasty deep; but will they come when I do summon them?

FILB. (*Going to desk R.*). Your business is to summon them. I'll vouch for their coming.

FRAW. But—

FILB. (*Taking out check book, writes and reads*). "Pay to Doctor Jarvis, ten thousand dollars." Sign this.

FRAW. You're crazy. How can I draw a check on a bank I've no account in?

FILB. But you have an account there. Do you see this? (*Writes out another check*). "Pay to Makepeace Frawley, ten thousand dollars. Stuyvesant Filbert." This check I date to-day. You can deposit it in the morning. Your check is dated to-morrow; so I can't take advantage of you. My only idea is to get square with Jarvis, for personal reasons. (*Rising*). To-morrow morning we meet at my lawyer's, draw up the terms of our agreement, and arrange

for the investment of the other forty thousand dollars. (*Going L. C.*). All you've got to do is to sign that check. (*Hands him the second check, and waits for the other.*)

FRAW. Is that all! Well, I can't lose by it, that's one sure thing.

FILB. Lose by it! (*Putting him in chair*). It is what is known in classic parlance as a lead pipe cinch.

FRAW. Here goes for the cinch! (*He writes his name to check*).

FILB. (*Aside*). It's done. My name doesn't appear, and she will have the money for Jarvis to-morrow.

FRAW. (*Hands check to FILBERT*).

(*Enter MRS. OAKS, L.*).

MRS. O. (*To FRAWLEY*). Oh, Mr. Frawley, Mr. Oaks is asking for you.

FRAW. Oaks! Good! Good! I'll go to him at once!

(*Exit FRAWLEY*).

MRS. O. (*Hurrying down to FILBERT*). Well!

FILB. (*Handing her the check*). It's done! Here!

MRS. O. (*Taking the check*). What does this mean?

FILB. Mr. Frawley has loaned us the money.

MRS. O. Mr. Frawley! Why—explain!

FILB. There is no time; I will explain after Jarvis is paid!

(*Enter MRS. FRAWLEY*).

MRS. F. Mr. Filbert, we won't wait for you any longer. I promised my guests you were going to sing for them.

FILB. Sing for them! Of course I'll sing for them.

(*Links arms with both ladies, one on each side, and singing "Punchinello" exits with them as the CURTAIN FALLS*).

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE: Luxuriously appointed private office of DR. JARVIS. On a handsomely ornamented table or desk, stands a large music-box; also a silver fruit-dish containing apples, oranges, etc.

DISCOVER: DR. JARVIS, seated at his desk, up R. C. At rise of curtain DR. JARVIS sounds bell. Enter WILKINS, C. from L.

DR. J. (*Looking at his watch*). Anybody else?

WILKINS. Only young Mr. What's-his-name, sir!

DR. J. Whom do you mean by young Mr. What's-his-name?

WILK. Young Mr. Max something, Frawley.

DR. J. Show him in.

(Exit WILKINS, C. to L.)

(DR. JARVIS writes silently at his desk for a minute).

(Enter MAXIMILIAN, C. from L.)

DR. J. (*Looking up from his writing indifferently*). Ah, Maximilian! How are you to-day?

MAX. (*Timidly, down L. C.*). I'm all right.

DR. J. Oh, you're all right! Then what brings you here?

MAX. (*Still perplexed*). 'Tis peculiar, isn't it. There's nothing the matter with me, but I want you to call on a friend of mine.

DR. J. Who is he?

MAX. It isn't a *he* at all, it's a lady.

DR. J. (*Chaffingly*). This is getting interesting. (*Rising*). 'Why, what's the trouble, Max? You look worried. Who is the lady?

MAX. I was calling on her just a little while ago, and she was suddenly overcome.

DR. J. From the effects of talking to you?

MAX. (*Smiling sulkily*). Ha! Ha! I wanted to rush out at once for a doctor, but she recovered in a fright, and said: "No, I hate doctors!" But I made up my mind to come round and see you, and ask you to call on her with me.

DR. J. Who is she, Max?

MAX. Miss Douglas, sir, Miss Mabel Douglas.

DR. J. I don't know her. (*In a tone of banter*). What is she to you, Max?

MAX. Oh, nothing at all, sir. Nothing at all—yet.

DR. J. Yet! Then you have hopes?

MAX. Yes, sir. I have hopes. That's all. She is so lovely, Doctor.

DR. J. Enthusiastic, I declare!

MAX. Never was before in all my life.

DR. J. How do you like it?

MAX. It makes me sort of blue.

DR. J. And bilious?

MAX. I guess so.

DR. J. Well, we'll see what can be done. (*Sounds bell on table*). I'll go with you.

(*Enter WILKINS, C.*).

DR. J. Wilkins, I'm going out. I shall not be in until three o'clock, and should any strangers call, I'm gone for the day. (*Going up C.*).

WILK. Strangers, sir?

DR. J. You know,—visitors who have not been here before.

WILK. All right, Doctor.

DR. J. Set my table to rights. Come along, Mr. Frawley.

(Exit DR. JARVIS followed by MAXIMILIAN C. to L.).

WILK. *(Alone, fumbling at desk)*. They're all invitations to dinners and parties. I'll be blessed if I see how he finds time to attend to the sick folks. Look at his office! 'Tain't like a ordinary, stick-to-business office of a doctor! Here's a music-box! People think it's a 'lectric battery till he sets it going for 'em. *(Sets it going. Picks up an orange off desk, and starts peeling it)*. I might as well enjoy myself! *(Bell rings)*. Hello! Visitors! After office hours! *(Goes outside C. Door heard opening. Music-box still playing fills up slight wait. Voices of OAKS, FRAWLEY and WILKINS)*.

OAKS. *(Outside)*. Then we'll wait.

WILK. *(Outside)*. Three o'clock.

OAKS. Don't care if it's thirteen o'clock!

(Enter OAKS and FRAWLEY, C. from L.).

FRAW. I wish you would quiet down, Oaks! I really have some important business propositions to make to you.

OAKS. This is no place for a business proposition.

FRAW. But you told me if I wanted to talk business with you, to come with you to the doctor's office.

OAKS. That may be. But don't you see, Frawley, that I'm not in a condition of mind to talk business. Don't you see that?

FRAW. Yes—but—

OAKS. Hang that music! *(Stops it)*.

FRAW. *(Coming down L. C.)*. It seems to me, Oaks

that I never want to talk business to you, but you're in a frightful, fidgetty, worrisome frame of mind. For goodness' sake, Oaks, what ails you !

OAKS. (*Going down R.*). More troubles than any one man can stand.

FRAW. (*Sitting in arm-chair down L. C.*). Business troubles ?

OAKS. If it were only that !

FRAW. Only that ! Why, isn't that your only trouble ?

OAKS. Bah !

FRAW. Why, "bah" ?

OAKS. What's the use of pouring out my grievances to you, Frawley ; you wouldn't appreciate them, you wouldn't understand them, you are not built that way.

FRAW. I want to be a comfort to you, Oaks ; but——

OAKS. Well, will you comfort me now to the extent of hiding your head somewhere, and not emerging till I whistle.

FRAW. (*Rises*). That is not respectful, Oaks. That's not treating my gray hairs with the consideration they deserve.

OAKS. Consideration be blowed ! Who considers *my* gray hairs ? *You* don't, my wife don't, perhaps you think *he* does !

FRAW. *He*, who ?

OAKS. That easy-going young traitor, whom, in a moment of weakness, I brought into the bosom of my family.

FRAW. You don't mean Filbert ?

OAKS. Whom else should I mean ?

FRAW. Jealous again ! Why, Oaks, Filbert's one of the finest fellows that ever set foot in New York.

OAKS. Oh, you think so too, do you ? One more of his dupes. That shows your sense. If I had your brains, Frawley, I'd take them out and have them dusted.

FRAW. (*Going to C.*). You'll be sorry some day for

having spoken to me like this, Oaks. For I'm in a position now to help you—yes, *help you*, and financially, too.

OAKS. Fiddledeedee!

FRAW. Not at all fiddledeedee. Fact!

OAKS. (*Sits on sofa R. C., crosses his knees, and pays no attention to FRAWLEY'S words whatever*).

FRAW. You have often said to me, when I came to you and wanted you to go in with me on some scheme, to bring any money I had to invest to *you*. You could do more good with it in your business than any one else: I've got money to put into your business, and I'm ready to put it into your business, and all I want is for you to arrange the terms, and I'll pull you out of any hole you may be in, no matter how deep it is.

OAKS. (*Who has not been listening*). I should like to wring both their necks, beginning with the scoundrel who poisons my blood with his anonymous letters.

FRAW. You need only say the word.

OAKS. Damn!

FRAW. Thank you, but that's not the word I mean. How much money do you need? Would fifty thousand help you out?

OAKS. What on earth are you prating about?

FRAW. I say, would fifty thousand dollars help you out?

OAKS. Help me out of what?

FRAW. Out of the hole.

OAKS. Which hole?

FRAW. For goodness gracious sakes, Oaks, do come out of the clouds, I shall think you have lost your wits.

OAKS. (*Breaking out*). I tell you, Frawley, any man who marries a wife a day younger than himself, is an idiot.

FRAW. True—true—Oaks—but irrelevant. I am talking dollars to you!

OAKS. And I'm talking sense to you!

FRAW. Now, look here, Oaks; if you're upset again about an anonymous letter, you deserve to be. I thought you had been cured of all that weakness, and I refuse to help you. But if it's money troubles, I'm ready, as I said before, to do business with you on terms of mutual profit.

OAKS. What do you want me to do? Negotiate shares in a patent windmill for you, or float a papier maché circus—or what is it?

FRAW. I want you to let me put some money into your business.

OAKS. Where are you going to get it?

FRAW. I've got it.

OAKS. In bonds—in real estate—or in poker chips?

FRAW. Money talks, Oaks. What will you say to me if I hand you Doctor Jarvis's receipt to-morrow, for the ten thousand dollars you owe him?

OAKS. (*Seriously, rising*). What is this?

FRAW. You heard what I said. I'll bring you his receipt for ten thousand. I want to be credited with these ten thousand, then I'll talk terms with you.

OAKS. Preposterous!

FRAW. Not at all! It's business! I mean to buy in with you.

OAKS. With me! Now look here, Frawley, I've been tight pressed for money; but if you think that I would handicap myself with you as a partner, for any paltry fifty thousand dollars, or five hundred thousand dollars, you are a worse reader of human nature than even I supposed. There are some things in the world that are impossible, and you are one of them.

FRAW. (*Alarmed*). Good land, man! Don't talk like that! You're upsetting all my plans. I've paid Doctor Jarvis ten thousand dollars already!

OAKS. I don't believe you!

FRAW. I can prove it!

OAKS. Show me his receipt?

FRAW. I will to-morrow.

OAKS. Show it me *now*!

FRAW. I can't do it.

OAKS. Of course you can't. And you won't be able to do it to-morrow, or next day—or next year! Frawley, there's no use my trying to talk sensibly to you. There are more side-lights to your brain than to a chandelier; and you dazzle me. I'm off. (*Crossing, L.*).

(*Enter WILKINS, C. from L.*).

OAKS. I'll be back in a little while, Wilkins. Tell the doctor—do you hear me—tell the doctor. And Frawley, ice your head! Wilkins, my friend Frawley is feverish; ice his head.

(*Exit OAKS, C. to L.*).

WILK. (*To FRAWLEY*). Shall I ice your head?

FRAW. Ice your grandmother!

WILK. All right sir!

(*Exit WILKINS, C. to L.*).

FRAW. This is a pretty state of affairs! I've bought in with Oaks, and he won't have it. I've paid ten thousand dollars to Jarvis for nothing! Thank goodness it wasn't my money! This is some trick of Filbert's. (*Going L.*). I'll get square on him! But on second thoughts I don't know what I've got to get square on him for! I've paid Jarvis with his money. If he can stand it, I can.

(*Enter SYLVIA and WILKINS, C.*).

FRAW. Hello, Sylvia! Have you seen Mr. Filbert this morning?

SYL. (*Quickly*). No, sir, and I don't want to see him.

FRAW. He's not popular, but I've got to see him. Where's my hat?

WILK. On your head, sir!

FRAW. Of course! Hang it on the rack for me, Wilkins! (WILKINS *about to take it*). Of course not, you idiot! Didn't you hear me say I was going out!

(*Exit FRAWLEY, C.*).

WILK. (*To SYLVIA, looking after FRAWLEY*). It's spasms! That's what it is, miss, spasms!

SYL. Where is the doctor?

WILK. Won't be home till three o'clock!

SYL. What time is it now?

WILK. Two something!

SYL. Thank you, Wilkins. I'll wait here. (*Goes to doctor's desk and begins to write*).

WILK. All right, miss; if you want anything, ring the bell, I'll be outside.

SYL. I shan't want anything, thank you, Wilkins.

WILK. You can't tell, miss. Some folks is took with spasms; there ain't no case of spasms that I can't treat. Them's my specialty.

SYL. Thank you, Wilkins.

(*Exit WILKINS, C.*).

SYL. (*Alone*). Spasms, indeed! Not physical, but mental perhaps, when I think of that man. Yes, Mr. Filbert. There's no use deceiving myself, I do think of him a great deal. I can't make him out. (*Takes apple from plate on the doctor's desk, and peels it*). It's no use trying to dismiss him from my mind, because I can't do it. Of course I would in a minute if I was firmly convinced that he had dismissed me from his; but just as I'm about to make up my mind that he doesn't care whether I'm dead or alive, he

does some tender and sentimental thing that sets me back for a week. Yesterday I was fully resolved (*eating apple*) that all was over between us, and I had erased him from the tablets of my memory. This morning I received a box of lovely cut flowers from him, with his card, and the words "Ever the same" written above his name. Now "Ever the same, Stuyvesant Filbert," can only mean one thing; because no man would say, "Ever the same, Stuyvesant Filbert" just to prove that he wasn't another man of the same name—and if he is the same Stuyvesant Filbert who met me at Mrs. Frawley's that day, and said those sweet things about my hazel eyes, and chestnut hair, he's just as nice now as he was then—and he was nice then. Just the nicest man I had ever met in my life. (*This speech she has spoken during the dividing and eating of the apple, having laid the peel on the desk. She now rises.*) I wish there was some test of a man's feelings! (*Seeing the peel*). Oh! they say if you throw an apple peel over your shoulder, the letter that it forms on the floor will tell you the initial of the man you're going to marry. It's nonsense, of course!—but I just wonder— Here goes (*Takes peel, and comes down C. with it*).

"With my sharp heel three times I mark the ground,"

(*Taps heel on ground*).

"And turn me thrice, around—around—around!"

(*Turning as she speaks, and throwing the peel over her shoulder; then turning quickly to look*). It's the letter S! S—S!! Stuyvesant—that's it—Stuyvesant! (*Joyously clapping her hands*). Stuyvesant begins with an S! I'll try it again! (*Throws it over her shoulder again*). S! It's S again! If it comes three times it's bound to be true! (*Throws peel violently over her shoulder, hitting, or all but hitting STUYVESANT FILBERT, who appears at door ushered in by WILKINS*).

SYL. (*Startled*). I beg your pardon.

FILB. Don't mention it. Do it again.

(*Exit WILKINS, C.*).

FILB. Didn't expect to find you here. I'm all the more delighted, even if I did have things thrown at me when I came in.

SYL. (*Very much embarrassed*). I assure you, Mr. Filbert, I had no intention of throwing anything at you. I'm awfully sorry. I beg your pardon. (*Going to pick it up*).

FILB. Allow me. What is it? (*Picking it up*). A snake?

SYL. It's only apple peel.

FILB. So it is! And may I ask what made you shed apple peel so violently?

SYL. I was only trying an experiment.

FILB. What was the experiment?

SYL. Just throwing the peel over my shoulder.

FILB. What for?

SYL. Why, you know—nothing. Why, it's only some silly schoolgirl notion that came to me.

FILB. Do tell me! If there's one thing more than another that interests me, it's a silly schoolgirl notion.

SYL. How many silly schoolgirls are you interested in?

FILB. I haven't kept score.

SYL. Of course not! That's the trouble with you men—you don't keep a score of the silly girls you know, and you get one confused with the other. Now, I'm not so silly as some silly schoolgirls you know; and I don't propose to give you the opportunity of poking fun at me. So, if you'll please give me that peel, I'll put it on the plate and say no more about it.

FILB. Oh, no—I won't! I'll keep it as a souvenir. I'll label it "Specimen of feather, shed by bird of paradise."

SYL. You'll do no such thing! (*Tries to get it*).

FILB. (*Defeating her plan*). Not till you tell me what you were doing.

SYL. You know the old trick of throwing a peel over one's shoulder, and finding out by the letter that's formed in falling, who the man is you're going to marry.

FILB. Oh, that's it—is it? So you threw the apple peel over your shoulder to find out whom you are going to marry. Singular. Well, what letter did it form?

SYL. I won't tell you.

FILB. Do, please.

SYL. (*Hesitatingly*). W.

FILB. W! Don't tell me you are going to marry a W! (*Thinking*). W? Who can it be? Not Wilkins? (*Laughs*).

SYL. (*Going L.*). Mr. Filbert, you are the most annoying man I ever met in all my life!

FILE. (*With mock sentimentality*). Don't say that, Miss Sylvia. Don't with one heedless word, spoken in an idle moment, get me to lose confidence in my own amiability. I'd rather be thought annoying by any one in the world than you. Some day, when I've twisted myself out of a lot of complications that are keeping me so feverish that I can't find the necessary repose, I will calmly, quietly, and collectedly tell you a story that will awaken you to a realizing sense of my great desire to be thought well of by you! (*Aside*). Whew!

SYL. My! What a sentence! And you expect a silly schoolgirl to be able to follow all that, and make a sensible reply?

FILB. Not at all! I've told you before I've no ambition to encounter anything sensible in our conversation. You don't know what a relief it is not to be compelled to talk sense all your life!

SYL. Oh, if you're looking for a perfect fool, I'm highly flattered that you've come to me!

FILB. Talking about fools, have you seen Maximilian Frawley this morning ?

SYL. I've not seen Mr. Maximilian Frawley this morning, and I don't want to see him. (*Going over R.*).

FILB. I'm sorry. I expected to find him at my hotel before I came away.

SYL. (*Sitting on arm of sofa*). Mr. Maximilian Frawley seems to enjoy a great deal of your confidence.

FILB. What makes you think so ?

SYL. He's betrayed some of it—and about a silly school-girl too—no doubt—she must have been silly to have kept your portrait on her mantelpiece, and given it instead of her own to Maximilian.

FILB. (*Who has been laughingly trying to interrupt her during the above ; now says seriously*). Miss Sylvia, pardon me, but you must stop talking of that silly school-girl, as you call her.

SYL. Because you care so much for her ?

FILB. Precisely. Because I care for her. More—well, almost more than for anybody in the world.

SYL. (*With tears in her voice*). In that case, of course, I beg your pardon. (*Starting to go*).

FILB. Oh—must you go ?

SYL. Yes. There's no advice you wish to give me, before I go, is there ?

FILB. (*Holding up the peet*). Oh, yes. Whatever you do, Miss Sylvia, don't marry a W.

(*Exit SYLVIA in a huff*).

FILB. (*Alone, takes out his watch*). It's three o'clock.
(*Voice of DR. JARVIS heard off, bidding good-by to SYLVIA.*)

Here he is.

(*Enter DR. JARVIS. The men exchange nods of recognition.*)

FILB. I believe we had an appointment this afternoon.

DR. J. Yes, we had, but unfortunately (*looking at his watch*) I had forgotten a previous appointment, made with a lady. It is now three—she is likely to arrive at any moment and interrupt us. Will you wait until she has gone, or will you return again?

FILB. I will wait. (*Indicating up stage*). Shall I go into the parlor?

DR. J. (*Aside*). She is there! (*Aloud*). No—into the library here—if you think you can amuse yourself.

FILB. I'm sure I can. It takes very little to amuse me.

(*Exit FILBERT into library, L.*)

DR. J. (*Rings bell*).

(*Enter WILKINS, C.*)

DR. J. There is a lady waiting, show her in.

(*Exit WILKINS. Enter MRS. OAKS, C.*)

MRS. O. (*As DR. JARVIS offers her a seat*). No, thank you. I just wish to transact the business that brings me here. (*Opening her purse*).

DR. J. You have succeeded in obtaining the money?

MRS. O. Here is a check. (*Handing it to him*).

DR. J. (*Reading check aloud*.) Signed by Mr. Frawley! This is singular! I didn't think he was in any position to lend ten thousand dollars.

MRS. O. You will pardon me if I decline to carry on any discussion of the matter. If you will kindly give me a receipt, I shall consider our business at an end.

DR. J. You will pardon *me*, if I am candid enough to hesitate about accepting Frawley's check, without an endorsement.

MRS. O. I don't understand you!

DR. J. Since you have divested this affair of all sentiment, and reduced it to mere business principles, I am privileged to decline accepting an uncertified check in liquidation of the debt you owe me.

MRS. O. What would you have me do ?

DR. J. (*Down R. C.*). I am not pressing you for the money. If this is not merely a make-shift, to gain time, Mr. Frawley will be willing to cash his own check. To-morrow will do—or next day—or in fact, any time most convenient to you.

MRS. O. You know that I promised to pay you the money to-day. Here it is. You have no right to doubt the value of this check.

DR. J. Forgive me for knowing a little more about business than you.

MRS. O. I can go to the bank, and have this check certified.

DR. J. You can to-morrow ! It is too late to-day.

MRS. O. I will leave you this check.

DR. J. I decline to accept it.

MRS. O. I cannot understand your motive. I refuse to believe it is merely a business stand that you are taking.

DR. J. If doubts are in order, permit me to doubt that you received this money from Mr. Frawley.

MRS. O. Has he not signed his name ?

DR. J. Did you ask Mr. Frawley for the money ?

MRS. O. I am not to be interrogated on the subject. I have brought you the money. (*Throwing check on desk*). Good afternoon ! (*Starts to go up C.*).

(*SYLVIA speaks off*). *

SYL. (*Outside*). I will go in ! (*Ad lib business outside*,
MRS. OAKS gets L.).

(*Enter SYLVIA C.*).

SYL. The idea of Wilkins trying to stop me when I wanted to see you, Doctor! (*Going familiarly to doctor*). As if I didn't own the house and the doctor too, when I wanted them!

MRS. O. What do you want, Sylvia?

SYL. I want to talk to you (*to doctor*) about Mrs. Frawley's charade. I must know positively what dresses I am to get——

DR. J. I am busy, Sylvia, just wait in the library for me, won't you, dear! (*Moving her off to library, L.*).

SYL. But—I can't put my dressmaker off any longer.

(*Exit SYLVIA into library, L.*).

DR. J. (*Coming quickly to MRS. OAKS, who has crossed R. C.*). And now, Mrs. Oaks—Evelyn—listen to me. You see your plan has failed. The money you said you would raise by three to-day, you have not raised. Let your failure serve as a token of success. It has enabled me to remain your creditor and one who will continue in silence to be your friend, through all time. Forgive me if yesterday, in my eagerness, I was too blunt. You know that those who feel deeply, are the least apt to choose the phrases that best convey their feelings. If I have erred, it was in speech only. I shall always be in debt to you no matter under what obligations you have placed yourself——

MRS. O. I will send my husband to you. (*She starts to go*).

(*Enter OAKS, C.*).

OAKS. Your husband is here.

MRS. O. (*Hurrying to him*). I am so glad you have come!

OAKS. Indeed! My presence here is not an intrusion?

MRS. O. I don't understand you!

OAKS. I shall endeavor to make you understand me, madam. I have followed you here——

DR. J. (*Starting up L.*). Perhaps you would be more at your ease if I were permitted to withdraw.

OAKS. (*Down R. C., to him*). Stay where you are, Doctor, I am quite at my ease. More, I fancy, than will quite suit the plans and purpose of Mrs. Oaks.

DR. J. You speak in riddles, Mr. Oaks !

OAKS. Perhaps this will enable you to better understand me ! (*Produces note*).

DR. J. (*Takes note*). Why, this is anonymous !

OAKS. It is.

DR. J. (*Affecting indignation*). And you have not allowed another anonymous letter to disconcert you ?

OAKS. That is not the question. I am here to have its meaning made clear.

MRS. O. Let me see it.

DR. J. (*Uneasily*). I shouldn't pay the slightest attention to it, if I were you. (*Tries to tear it*).

MRS. O. (*In tone of command*). Don't destroy it !

OAKS. Give it to me ! (*Takes it from him*).

MRS. O. Let me see it ! Perhaps I know the writing. (*With a look at the doctor*).

OAKS. That is a matter of small concern.

DR. J. I agree with Mr. Oaks, that is a matter of very small concern. The note itself is absolutely without meaning ; that is the main point.

OAKS. Absolutely without meaning ! How do I know it is absolutely without meaning. (*Turning to MRS. OAKS*). Why have you come here ?

MRS. O. I don't understand your question.

DR. J. She has come to consult her physician, of course.

OAKS. Mrs. Oaks knows that is not so.

MRS. O. (*Aside*). How much does *he* know !

DR. J. Mr. Oaks, you surprise me !

OAKS. I have long doubted the ailments that caused my wife to make such frequent visits to her physician—I little

thought that she would choose his office as a rendezvous for herself and her lover !

MRS. O. (*With ire*). You are forgetting yourself !

OAKS. Where is he ?

DR. J. Of whom do you speak ?

OAKS. Of the man whom she has come to meet.

MRS. O. I came to transact a matter of business with Doctor Jarvis !

OAKS. A matter of business indeed ! You cannot deceive me, madam.

DR. J. There is evidently some great mistake.

MRS. O. (*Crossing to C.*). Then I shall explain it.

DR. J. (*Nervously*). Explanations will only further complicate matters.

MRS. O. I *will* speak. Mr. Oaks, the object of my visit to Doctor Jarvis, was to restore to him the money which I borrowed for you last week. Is this not so ? (*To doctor*).

DR. J. It is quite so.

OAKS. Ten thousand dollars ?

MRS. O. Ten thousand dollars.

OAKS. And where did you succeed in getting so large a sum of money, and why have I not been told of it ?

MRS. O. One question at a time. My motive in saying nothing to you I will explain some other time—as for the source whence I obtained the money, the check I have tendered the doctor will speak for itself. (*Takes check from desk and gives it to Oaks*).

OAKS. What is this ! Frawley's check for ten thousand dollars ! Preposterous ! It is not worth the paper it is written on !

DR. J. That is precisely the point I was arguing with Mrs. Oaks when you arrived.

MRS. O. But surely Mr. Frawley would not have given me a spurious check !

OAKS. Who and what prompted you to hasten the pay-

ment of this money to Doctor Jarvis? And who and what prompted you to go to Frawley to get it?

MRS. O. (*Aside*). What shall I say?

OAKS. You cannot answer! Then it is not to you I must look for my reply!

(*Voice of FILBERT heard quarrelling with SYLVIA*).

(*Enter FILBERT and SYLVIA*).

FILB. (*To Sylvia*). You will know all about her some day!

SYL. Don't you ever speak another word to me! I hate you!

FILB. (*Seeing the others*). Ah—this is an unexpected pleasure.

OAKS. (*Aghast. To FILBERT*). May I ask, sir, what particular and especial business it is, that has concealed you in the doctor's apartments at this hour?

FILB. I don't know that I am obliged to tell you that!

MRS. O. (*Manifests her nervousness to FILBERT*).

OAKS. Perhaps you can throw some light on this check?

FILB. (*Reads*). "Pay to Doctor Jarvis or order ten thousand dollars. Signed, Makepeace Frawley." How does that concern me?

OAKS. It does concern you! I am not blind, sir!

(*Enter FRAWLEY, listens to conversation*).

OAKS. Your presence here and this check have some connection. What it is rests for you to explain!

FRAW. (*Coming down*). Let me explain.

OAKS. (*Putting him aside*). Pardon me, but I wish to hear from Mr. Filbert.

FRAW. But that's my check!

OAKS. Your check! Why, your check isn't worth beans!

FRAW. (*Getting angry*). Not worth beans! I'll bet ten thousand dollars it's worth beans! Tell them, Mr. Filbert, don't let them disparage my credit like this.

FILB. Well, if Mr. Frawley insists upon having it told, I am willing. I didn't wish to expose his private affairs—I loaned him the money.

OAKS. You did! And you followed him here, I suppose, to see him pay it to Doctor Jarvis?

FILB. I came here to demand an interview with Doctor Jarvis. (*Crossing to doctor who is at desk*). He has disappointed me, and I must insist now on his being at my hotel at eight this evening. (*Gives him card*).

DR. J. Pardon me upon insisting on an explanation here and now. If my office has been used as a rendezvous, I have a right to know it.

FILB. What do you mean?

DR. J. Mr. Oaks, allow me! (MR. OAKS *holds out note to FILBERT*).

FILB. An anonymous note! (*Reads*). "She will meet him at Doctor Jarvis's office at three to-morrow."

OAKS. Now perhaps you will say that your being here with Mrs. Oaks is merely an accident; and that your lending Mr. Frawley ten thousand dollars to be given to Mrs. Oaks, is another accident.

FILB. I know that writing! (*Puts note on desk*).

DR. J. Well, sir!

FILB. (*Aside*). He is trying to compromise her! (*Aloud*). No, gentlemen—since you have driven me to the wall, I must confess.

MRS. O. (*Aside*). What will he say?

FILB. I was reluctant about making this confession in public, but since I am compelled, all the better that it should be made in the presence of the relatives of Miss Sylvia Oaks.

ALL. What do you mean!

FILB. I hope you will not blame me, Mr. Oaks, for showing what must have appeared a strange interest in your affairs, when I tell you that I love your sister Sylvia, and ask her hand in marriage.

OAKS. (*Surprised.*) Sir !

(SYLVIA *manifests amazement*).

DR. J. But this note, sir ! Explain !

FILB. She will meet him at three o'clock in Doctor Jarvis' office ? Well, she has kept her appointment ; *she has met him*, hasn't she ? But it was mean, Doctor, of somebody, to have betrayed us ! Wasn't it ! (*Slaps him on shoulder. Picture*).

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE: FILBERT'S apartments at his hotel.

At rise of curtain the stage is clear. After a moment enter MRS. OAKS and MRS. FRAWLEY,
R. 2 E.

MRS. F. You are with *me*, Mrs. Oaks, so don't be nervous.

MRS. O. It is very easy for you not to be nervous; but if, under the circumstances I have described to you, a gentleman had suddenly proposed for the hand of your ward, you'd be a little nervous hunting him up yourself.

MRS. F. I have every confidence in Mr. Filbert. When he sent for me to call on him, and said if I did not find him in, to wait, I took it for granted that there were reasons why he couldn't call on me.

(Enter MABEL DOUGLAS, L. 2 E.).

MABEL DOUGLAS. (About to remove her bonnet). Oh, I beg pardon. One of these ladies must be the one Mr. Filbert was expecting. Won't you be seated? (Both ladies are surprised). My name is Mabel—Mabel Douglas. No doubt Mr. Filbert has told you who I am. (Both ladies continue to exchange looks). One of you ladies is Maximilian's mother. That's you. (Referring to MRS. FRAWLEY). Of course! (Going to her and putting her in chair R. of table). I have so often wanted to know you, but both Mr. Filbert and Maximilian said that would come in due time. Of course Maximilian has spoken to you about it.

MRS. F. About what? (MRS. O. goes up R. C., looking off R. U. E. nervously).

MAB. About us.

MRS. F. Who am I to take to be—us?

MAB. Why, Maximilian and me.

MRS. F. This is very singular, Miss Douglas. But he hasn't said a word.

MAB. (*Smiling*). That's just like Max. Mr. Filbert always says there's no knowing what Max *will* do, or what he *won't* do. I should have thought he would have told his mother, the first thing.

MRS. F. Told his mother what?

MAB. That he had obtained Mr. Filbert's consent.

MRS. F. Consent to what?

MAB. Why—why—to our engagement.

MRS. F. Whose engagement?

MAB. Maximilian's engagement to me!

MRS. O. (*Coming down R. Taking sudden part in the conversation*). What has Mr. Filbert to do with the matter, that his consent should be necessary?

MAB. Oh, perhaps I ought to have begun at the beginning, but I thought surely you knew all about Mr. Filbert before you came. Mr. Filbert is my father.

MRS. O. Your *what*!

MAB. Not my real, sure, father—but the only father I ever knew. He brought me up. He's been the kindest, sweetest father any girl ever had in the world. But I thought, of course, you knew all about this.

MRS. O. (*To MRS. FRAWLEY*). This is certainly news to me, Mrs. Frawley, is it not to you?

MRS. F. It is in part—not altogether. (*Introducing*). Miss Douglas, this is Mrs. Oaks.

MAB. (*Innocently glad going to MRS. O., R.*). Oh, Mrs. Oaks, you are the lovely lady Mr. Filbert has so often spoken to me about. Sure enough, you have hazel eyes—

MRS. O. Yes—and chestnut hair.

MAB. I have often been jealous of you!

MRS. O. Indeed !

MAB. Yes, for you've no idea how many, many times Mr. Filbert has spoken about you. Oh, he'll be so pleased to see you when he comes. He's gone to get some papers to give Doctor Jarvis. He won't be long.

MRS. F. To give Doctor Jarvis ?

MAB. Yes. (*Goes up C. Takes flowers from mantel, puts in vase on table up L.*).

MRS. F. (*Aside to MRS. O. Rising and going to her*). Do you know who Doctor Jarvis is ? Her father !

MRS. O. (*Surprised*). No !

(*Enter MAXIMILIAN, R. U. E.*).

MAX. Hello, mother ! What are you doing here ?

MRS. F. That's what I should like to ask of you ?

MAX. Why, *you* know. At least you ought to know—but, on second thoughts, how should you ? You would never listen to me when I wanted to talk to you about these things.

MAB. I have told your mother all about it, Max.

MAX. (*Going up to her, C.*). How good of you, Mabel, it has saved me a deal of trouble.

MRS. F. (*Crossing L.*). You call it trouble, do you ? My boy, your trouble has only just begun.

(*MAX. is talking to MABEL.*)

(*Enter FILBERT, R. U. E., with papers.*).

FILB. Hello—how's everybody !

MAB. (*Running to him and embracing him*). Papa Stuyve !

FILB. (*Embarrassed*). You mustn't, Mabel.

MAB. Why not ?

FILB. To be embraced by a young lady in the presence of other young ladies ; and to be called papa in this reckless fashion, may cut off all sorts of future possibilities !

MAB. I don't understand you.

MRS. F. Don't distress yourself, Mr. Filbert; your daughter has told us all.

FILB. Impossible! She couldn't have told you all. She doesn't know all herself. (*To MABEL, who has joined MAX*). Mabel!

MAB. (*Coming down a trifle*). Yes, papa Stuyve!

FILB. *Don't!* Mabel, I see you have lassoed Maximilian!

MAB. Yes, papa Stuyve!

FILB. *Don't!* Take Maximilian softly by the hand, and lure him into the adjoining room. I want to talk with his mother.

MAB. Yes, papa Stuyve!

FILB. *Don't!*

MAB. Come along, Max!

(*Exeunt MAX and MABEL, L. U. E.*).

FILB. Does Mrs. Oaks know who the young lady is, who calls me "papa Stuyve"?

MRS. F. I have told her.

FILB. Good—then you know that "papa" is a title I have not earned, only acquired.

MRS. O. I do! You may remember, or perhaps you have forgotten, that at about half-past three this afternoon, you asked the hand of my sister-in-law in marriage.

FILB. True enough! So I did!

MRS. O. And immediately thereupon, you disappeared!

FILB. That's so—isn't it! You can imagine how busy I've been.

MRS. O. Mr. Oaks has been cross-examining me ever since, and Sylvia, on being asked point blank by my husband whether she really wanted to marry you, answered that she would not have you, if there wasn't another man on earth.

FILB. You don't mean it!

MRS. O. Mr. Oaks is coming here to see you and in view of this, I have prevailed upon Mrs. Frawley to come with me and pay you this visit. You are forewarned—consequently, I trust, forearmed, and my duty is fulfilled. (*Starting to go*).

FILB. (*In comic fright*). Surely you don't intend to let me cope with this situation single-handed!

MRS. O. I certainly do!

FILB. Then say at least, that I have *your* consent to marry Sylvia.

MRS. O. I will not answer that question, until Sylvia asks my consent to marry *you*!

FILB. Oh!

MRS. O. Which, as you know, she never will do.

FILB. Well, this is a nice condition of affairs.

MRS. F. And now it is *my* turn.

FILB. *Et tu, Brute!*

MRS. F. (*Leaning over table towards him*). Do you think it is right to let Maximilian entangle himself in a love affair, without giving me some idea of it first?

FILB. What good would it have done to have given you an idea of it?

MRS. F. Has a mother no rights over her son?

FILB. Not over such a son.

MRS. F. What do you mean?

FILB. I mean some sons are not good for anything in the world but to get married.

MRS. F. (*Rising*). Sir!

FILB. What good on earth would Mr. Frawley have been, if he hadn't married *you*?

MRS. F. Mr. Filbert!

FILB. And your son takes after his father!

MRS. F. (*Going around back of table*). I will send Mr. Frawley to you; you and he can argue it out together.

FILB. Don't—please don't! You don't know how diffi-

cult it is to argue with Mr. Frawley, it's like carrying on a conversation in a foreign language.

(*Enter FRAWLEY, R. U. E.*)

FRAW. Ah, he's at home. How are you, Filbert! What are you doing here, Mrs. Frawley? Ah, Mrs. Oaks!

MRS. F. Mr. Filbert wants to talk to you about Maximilian.

FRAW. (*Coming down, R.*) Maximilian be blowed! I've come here on business!

MRS. F. (*To MRS. OAKS.*) Come along, Mrs. Oaks, if these gentlemen are going to talk business, this is no place for us!

MRS. O. Good-bye, Mr. Filbert! We will drop in by-and-by, after you have seen Mr. Oaks.

FILB. Thank you!

(*Exeunt MRS. OAKS and MRS. FRAWLEY, R. U. E.*)

FRAW. Sit down, Mr. Filbert. I want some of your time.

FILB. Can't you take it standing?

FRAW. No, sir. I want to tackle you from Alpha to Omega. When a man gets another to sign a check——

FILB. Hold on. Your son Maximilian——

FRAW. Will you stop throwing that son of mine in my teeth!

FILB. Your son Maximilian wants to get married.

FRAW. He's a d——d fool!

FILB. He says you owe him some money, and he must have it.

FRAW. The impertinent brat! Does he dare dun his father!

FILB. He says that you've put him off with promises from day to day, and if he can't get you to stump up now that he needs the money to get married, he'll bring suit.

FRAW. Bring fiddle-sticks! Does he forget I'm his father? (*Crossing L.*). I'll pay him when I get ready. Do you understand?

FILB. When will that be?

FRAW. Mr. Filbert, you annoy me—do you understand?—you worry me! I've not come here to be worried! I want to speak to you about those checks!

FILB. Let us dispose of Maximilian's matter first.

FRAW. What's Maximilian to you?

FILB. I want him for a son-in-law!

FRAW. Whose father's daughter do you want him to marry, to make him your son-in-law!

FILB. My father's son's daughter by adoption.

FRAW. Draw me a diagram please, (*handing him lead pencil*) and I'll understand you.

FILB. I have an adopted daughter, who is foolish enough to care for your son.

FRAW. She must have graduated from the same brain department.

FILB. I won't let her marry him, until he has some money, so he's waiting for what you owe him.

(FRAWLEY *enraged, tries to speak. Speechless with rage*).

FILB. Now you've got ten thousand in the bank——

FRAW. At last you're beginning to talk sense!

FILB. You shall make your son, Mr. Frawley, a wedding present of those ten thousand dollars.

FRAW. Never!

FILB. Oh yes. Be reasonable. The money isn't yours.

FRAW. What of it?

FILB. Then you can certainly afford to give it away.

FRAW. You're trying to make a fool of me.

FILB. That would be impossible.

FRAW. You made me sign a check that couldn't be used, for a consideration that I couldn't claim, and now you

want me to give away this consideration when I tell you it isn't mine. What kind of a catch-as-catch-can game are you playing with me?

FILB. Don't you see that by a roundabout way I want to put money in your son's pocket, to enable him to marry my adopted daughter?

FRAW. Well, let me understand. If I make my son a present of that money which doesn't belong to me, you'll get his receipt in full for all claims, real or imagined, he holds against his father up to date?

FILB. That's the idea.

FRAW. Well, I'll do it.

FILB. I thought you would be reasonable.

FRAW. I can't lose by it. At least I don't *think* I can lose by it. (*Arguing it out with himself, exits*).

(*Servant having previously entered with card ; FILBERT takes card, nods to servant and goes to desk and writes. Exit servant.*)

(*Enter DR. JARVIS, R. U. E.*).

DR. J. Mr. Filbert.

FILB. Ah, Doctor Jarvis!

DR. J. I am here, Mr. Filbert, to demand that explanation from you which I was unable to obtain this afternoon at my office.

FILB. That suits me exactly. Won't you sit down?

DR. J. (*Sitting R.*). To the point, at once! I refuse to accept the solution you gave to the situation this afternoon. I know that the money loaned for the payment of those ten thousand dollars to me, came from you!

FILB. Indeed! And what then?

DR. J. I think too highly of Mrs. Oaks to allow her to be compromised by you!

FILB. Since when has Doctor Jarvis become a defender of reputations? You mustn't affect this spirit of badinage

with me. (DR. J. *turns to him*). There was a small boy once, who caught a fish, and as he dangled it, he exclaimed: "My, little fish, what a good time we are going to have together!" "Together?" cried the fish. "Not for me!" and it simply disentangled itself, and flopped back into the sea. Now I'll give you the choice of two things—for I might as well tell you that you are the fish: we can have fun together—or you can flop back into the sea. But you must choose quickly.

DR. J. If you knew me better, Mr. Filbert, you would know that this flippant vein of yours can have no effect on me!

FILB. Doctor Jarvis, not only do I know you—but I can follow your career back to the time you were a student. It was in those days you became acquainted with Nellie Douglas.

DR. J. And what then! (*Nervously*).

FILB. Ah, the fish approaches the hook! Nellie Douglas came to you, a patient. She left you, a broken-hearted woman.

DR. J. Who has told you this?

FILB. The fish is caught! Nellie Douglas told me her story in San Francisco—how she was ensnared by you into what she believed a marriage. How, after a few months, when you had grown tired of her, and found other fashionable patients with whom you could "sympathize" you told her that your marriage was all a sham, and that you had been married before, and to convince her produced a certificate antedating your marriage with her. Nellie Douglas, instead of prosecuting you for bigamy, left you in despair, died broken-hearted, and bequeathed her child to me.

DR. J. (*Rising*). Her child! My God, man! Where have you heard this?

FILB. I have brought her up as my own. She has never known her father so that her young heart has never learned to hate the man who wronged her mother.

DR. J. Where is this girl?

FILB. You were summoned to her side yesterday during my absence by young Frawley.

DR. J. That beautiful girl? My daughter—my child!

FILB. Yes, but only in name.

DR. J. She is my child! I was married to Nellie Douglas. The certificate that I produced in order to make her cancel her marriage was only——

FILB. Only a cheat! Ah! We've got it at last!

DR. J. I—I—didn't say that!

FILB. But I did! I hold the spurious document which your wife gave me on her death-bed. I have examined the register. I find no such marriage recorded. The lie that rid you of your lawful wife is exposed—and now, Mr. Fish, will you dangle, or will you withdraw into the sea?

DR. J. You have proved that I am the lawful father of that child, and I now claim her from you.

FILB. (*Rising*). Not so fast! Before you deserted Nellie Douglas, you obtained—by a forged order—the money left her by her father; five thousand dollars—which belongs to her child.

DR. J. (*Sneering*). Go on.

FILB. I have prepared a document which I want you to sign. I want to be constituted the *legal*, as I am already the *established* guardian, of Mabel Douglas. After you have signed this, I demand that you refund to your daughter the dowry of her mother; the five thousand dollars that started you on your fashionable career.

DR. J. If I refuse?

FILB. You do so as a forger! (*Doctor starts*). If you accept, you do so as a friend and well wisher, and as a wise fish that knows its own sea.

DR. J. Shall I be denied the right of claiming my own child?

FILB. (*With genuine touch of sentiment*). Doctor Jar-

vis, let me appeal to that one spark of manhood which must survive in you in spite of all. You, and this innocent girl, have never known each other in the relation of father and daughter. Her heart has been won by others whom she loves, and who love her. Why should her life be blighted now, with a knowledge that could not come to her save with bitterness?

(DR. J., *evidently moved, crosses and sits at desk ; writes. Business of FILBERT motioning MABEL on*).

(*Enter MABEL*).

FILB. Little girl, this gentleman has just been very kind and good to you.

MAB. Doctor Jarvis?

FILB. He knew your mother very well, and cared for her very, very much. As an old friend of your mother's, he wants to see you happily provided for, and he has just presented you with a large sum of money, which I shall keep for you as a wedding present. (*Holding MABEL*). He is going to leave the city, so you won't be able to see him again. So thank him for his kindness, and wish him a safe journey.

MAB. Oh, sir, I thank you so much! If my dear mother were alive she would thank and bless you too. (*Runs to him and kneels to him*).

DR. J. (*Overcome ; presses her head, rises, points to documents on the desk for FILBERT to see*).

(*Exit DOCTOR JARVIS, R. U. E. MABEL crossing to door R. U. E., looks after him*).

FILB. (*After pause*). And the fish fell back into the sea.

(*Enter OAKS, R. U. E.*).

OAKS. I hope I'm not interrupting a delightful family scene.

FILB. Not at all.

(Enter MAX, L. U. E.).

MAX. May I come in?

OAKS. (*Bows*). I came to see——

FILB. Yes, I know. You needn't go, children. We can combine business with pleasure. Mr. Oaks wishes to talk to me on a matter that's going to interest us *all*!

OAKS. I don't understand.

FILB. Let me conduct the case, Mr. Oaks. The first question you are going to ask me is: Why I loaned Mr. Frawley those ten thousand dollars which Jarvis declined? Those ten thousand dollars are now the property of Mr. Maximilian Frawley; it is to serve him after all, that the whole scheme was cooked up by Mr. Frawley. He wanted me to help him buy into your business, that his son Maximilian might be restored to his place.

OAKS. All on account of Maximilian!

FILB. Yes. There stands the hero.

MAX. (*Proudly to MABEL*). Here stands the hero.

FILB. And the next question you are going to ask, is: Why my interest in Maximilian? He is going to marry my adopted daughter.

OAKS. Your adopted daughter!

FILB. Miss Mabel Douglas. And now, Mr. Oaks, if you will entertain it, I am prepared to make you a business proposition on behalf of my future son-in-law, tending to his securing a foothold in the firm of Abram Oaks & Co.

OAKS. This sounds something like sense. I couldn't understand the thing at all from the way old Frawley put the case the other day.

FILB. That's his trick of muddling things.

OAKS. And now Mr. Filbert, there remains one point more.

FILB. Oh, yes. I divine that. Perhaps we might as well discuss that between ourselves. Mabel, dear, if you

could find something to do, that would enlist the joint services of Maximilian——

MAX. (*With a gleam of intelligence*). I understand. You want us to go.

FILB. How quick he is to take a hint !

MAB. All right, papa Stuyve. (*Embraces him*).

(*At the embrace, enter SYLVIA, R. U. E. She stands at back*).

(*Exeunt MAX and MABEL*).

SYL. Abram, Evelyn's downstairs, and sent me up to find you. I don't know why.

FILB. I wonder if I could guess ?

SYL. (*Turns up her nose and walks by him, R. U. E.*).

OAKS. Mr. Filbert, Sylvia is, as you know, the subject we were about to discuss. (*Pause*). Shall we continue ?

SYL. I'd rather not be discussed by Mr. Filbert.

FILB. I did myself the honor of asking Sylvia's hand in marriage. I am anxiously awaiting your consent.

OAKS. What do you say, Sylvia ?

SYL. I have already told you my answer.

OAKS. In that case, Mr. Filbert, there is nothing for me to do.

FILB. Yes, there is.

OAKS. What ?

FILB. You won't be offended if I tell you ?

OAKS. Certainly not !

FILB. Disappear !

OAKS. Disappear ?

FILB. Yes—into the adjoining room. Here's a newspaper. Baseball—politics—the tariff bill—divorce suits—all sorts of cheerful things. The Giants are way ahead—but maybe you don't care for baseball ?

(*OAKS laughs and exits, R.*)

SYL. (*Alarmed, starts to run after him. FILBERT catches her by the skirt and detains her*).

SYL. Let go of my dress.

FILB. Not until you promise you won't run off.

SYL. I promise nothing. Release me!

FILB. You are released—but I conjure you remain!

SYL. You think that sounds impressive, don't you? But I refuse to be conjured!

FILB. Then I beseech!

SYL. I refuse to be beseeched; I mean besought!

FILB. Then I implore you to remain!

SYL. What do you want me to remain for?

FILB. For ever!

SYL. You think because you can say odd and unexpected things that you can trample upon one's feelings and then frolic one back into good humor—but you can't with me. I have discovered the kind of man you are, and I never want to speak to you again! (*Goes up R. C.*).

FILB. So I have understood! Theoretically, we have parted forever; you go your way, and I mine! Theoretically I am unworthy ever again to face those smiling eyes—theoretically. But practically, Sylvia, there is a mistake somewhere, and we must find it and correct it; and, as the dentists say, extract it without pain to the sitter.

SYL. It's not only one mistake; there are twenty. In fact, for fear I might forget them, I have written them all down on a sheet of paper, so no blandishments of yours will avail to wipe them out! (*Takes out folded sheet of tinted note paper*).

FILB. Let me see them.

SYL. No!

FILB. They can't be very terrible if you need a written document to refresh your memory.

SYL. Not to refresh my memory—but to hold me to my purpose.

FILB. Name a few of my crimes. Begin with the worst ones.

SYL. (*Sitting L. of table*). The greatest of all is your confession that you cared for some one else.

FILB. Yes?

SYL. Whom I saw you embracing as I entered the room!

FILB. Oh, you saw me embracing her?

SYL. Yes.

FILB. That is the young lady who is going to marry Maximilian Frawley. She is my adopted daughter.

SYL. Max—your—adopted—daughter! Is that the truth?

FILB. It is, Sylvia.

SYL. Well, then, for No. 2. When you met me at Doctor Jarvis's (*suddenly getting back*)—why didn't you tell me about this before?

FILB. Because I was trying to find the girl's real father.

SYL. And did you find him?

FILB. (*After a pause*). No!

SYL. Well, then, for No. 3 on my list.

FILB. We haven't had number two yet!

SYL. I forgot! But tell me—were you very fond of her—your adopted daughter?

FILB. Very, very fond—as your father must be of you.

SYL. Only as a father?

FILB. Why, of course, you silly little thing!

SYL. Well, then, for No. 4.

FILB. No, I refuse to be jumped from No. 1 to No. 4. You had better consult that list; in fact, it will save time for me to consult it myself. (*Takes it from her*).

SYL. (*After an attempt at resisting, resigned*). I don't retract any of those charges! (*Goes down L.*).

FILB. Why, this is a funny sort of list! (*Reads*). "Dear Mrs. Frawley."

SYL. What's that? (*In alarm*).

FILB. "As I first met Mr. Filbert through your introduction, I must take you into my confidence——"

SYL. Give me back that letter!

FILB. (*Continues reading*). "I shall never in my life care for another man as I care for him."

SYL. (*Gets the letter*). I must have sent Mrs. Frawley the list by mistake!

FILB. (*Embracing her*). Not by mistake. On purpose to let me hear your own sweet confession! Sylvia, from the first moment I set eyes on you, I felt for you a tender sympathy deeper than words can tell you.

SYL. Is that true?

FILB. I love you and want you to be my little wife. Sylvia, will you take me for your very own?

SYL. (*hesitating*.) I-d-d——don't know—I think——

FILB. Let me hold you tight, while you're thinking. (*Embraces her*).

(*Enter MRS. FRAWLEY, R. U. E.*).

MRS. F. I beg your pardon!

BOTH. Mrs. Frawley!

MRS. F. I received a mysterious letter at the house, just now—not signed. I can't make it out at all, but as it has your name on it, Mr. Filbert, I thought you might explain.

FILB. (*Taking paper from Mrs. Frawley*). It's my list of crimes against Sylvia—for all of which I now atone. (*Embracing her*).

MRS. F. Indeed, I congratulate you.

(*Enter MRS. OAKS*).

MRS. O. Where is Mr. Oaks?

FILB. Been, and gone, and left me Sylvia. Have I your consent?

MRS. O. You know what I told you—not until Sylvia shall ask for it.

FILB. Sylvia, repeat what I shall say. "Evelyn, I love Mr. Filbert, may I have him for keeps?"

SYL. Evelyn—(*Pause*). Those are my sentiments. (FILBERT *kisses her behind her hat which he lifts off her head*. OAKS *joins* MRS. OAKS, FRAWLEY *has entered at back with* MAX and MABEL—*Picture*).

CURTAIN.

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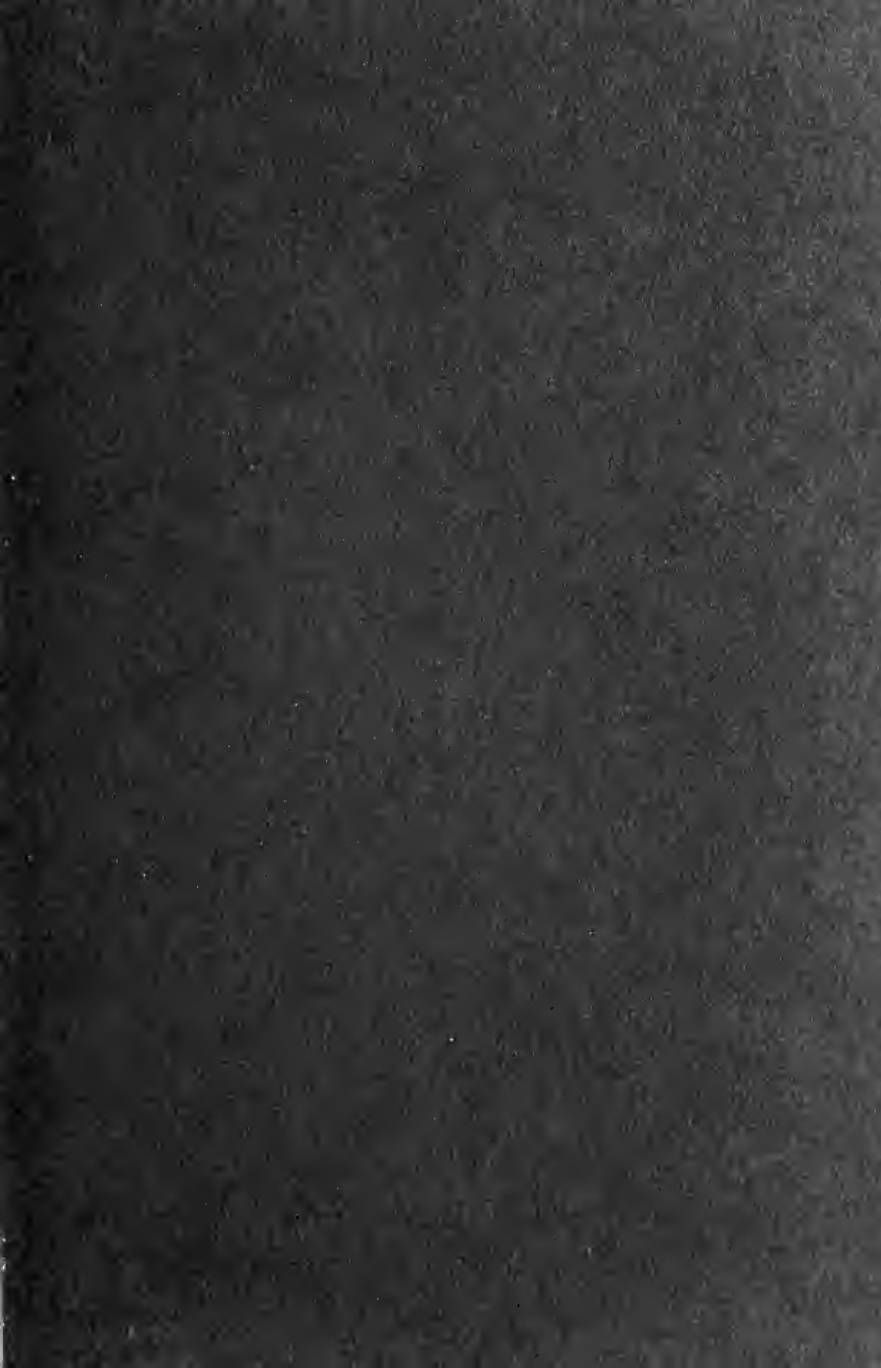
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